

GEORGE BOURNE
and
The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable

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By

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I confess my early and large indebtedness to him [Bourne] for enabling me to apprehend, with irresistible clearness, the inherent sinfulness of slavery under all circumstances, and its utter incompatibility with the spirit and precepts of Christianity. William Lloyd Garrison to Theodore Bourne, November 18, 1858.

Next to the Bible, we are indebted to this work [*The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable*] for our views of the system of slavery. We pronounce it the most faithful and conclusive exposition of the cruelty and sin of holding the slaves in bondage that we have ever seen. William Lloyd Garrison in the *Liberator*, March 17, 1832.

Lewis Tappan, William Goodell, Theodore D. Weld, and S. S. Jocelyn had studied out the Slavery Question for themselves; and so far as they derived suggestions from others, they had the benefit of George Bourne's instruction. Joshua Leavitt in the *National Anti-Slavery Standard*, October 24, 1844.

INTRODUCTION

LONG and patient research has thrown new light upon the early phases of the antislavery movement in the United States, particularly the arraignment of the churches as bulwarks of slavery, the bitter tones of the indictment, and the fundamental issues involved. William Lloyd Garrison was long credited with having been the first and foremost exponent of the sin of slavery and advocate of universal, immediate emancipation. He has steadily lost ground in the overall picture of the movement. His sons and his associates—Samuel J. May, Oliver Johnson, and William Goodell—were first in the field with their claims of unique preeminence in leadership for him. With each new study, however, it becomes more evident that, substantial and essential as was Garrison's contribution, it was neither as all-embracing and predominant, nor as influential as his biographers have endeavored to show.

Few men would argue any longer that he was responsible for the petition campaign, the agency system, the operations of the underground railroad, or any other aspect of the organized operations, particularly political action. About the only real claim to preeminence on his part is that he and he alone turned the tide against colonization by his advocacy of immediate, uncompensated, universal emancipation and that he *first* denounced slavery as an enormous sin. That claim now looks somewhat in need of revision.

When historians make their final account, George Bourne probably will be accorded the distinction of having been the first immediate abolitionist in America, the first of the fiery pamphleteers and authors, the forerunner and inspirer of Theodore Dwight Weld and others whose labors he lived to share. He is one of the men whose ideas after long germination bore amazing fruit in action which brought an end to slavery. He was the exponent of antislavery pronouncements which shook the Presbyterian Church to its foundations. By a strange irony of fate, in neither ecclesiastical nor secular history has his work received more than casual notice, and no adequate account of his life is available.

References to Bourne in William Birney's life of his father and in the life of Garrison by his sons are infrequent. We are here presenting, after long and painstaking research, an account of his life, his expulsion from the Presbyterian ministry, and his contributions to the literature of the antislavery movement. We are making available, also, a reprinting of his *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable*, now almost inaccessible.

Bourne's life may appear to have been one of constant turmoil, his spirit petulant, his conduct quarrelsome. That it was one of poverty and unceasing labor is certain. That he had great courage, an indomitable will, and exceptional forthrightness is perfectly obvious. He proved that while he was living among people who acted as if slavery with all its injustice and cruelty was consistent with the following of Jesus in a land dedicated to freedom. When he truthfully described slaveholders as he saw them and called them exactly what the Bible called them, "menstealers," the two Presbyterian ministers who led his presbytery, with their followers, mercilessly hounded him nearly to death. They never desisted until they had accomplished his deposition from the ministry and contrived his exile from Virginia for the rest of his life. Under such treatment a serene and kindly disposition is not usually developed. In spite of it Bourne did have a kindly human side to which men from time to time bore witness. Lewis Tappan's tribute to him after his death was favorable and friendly, and Tappan was a good judge of men. When not attacking wrongdoing or defending himself against the onslaught of his foes, he was a warm friend to his associates.

There is in the Library of the Historical Society of Delaware a wee book, "Printed not Published," named *Abolitionrieties: or Remarks on Some of the Members of the Pennsylvania State Anti-Slavery Society . . . and the American Anti-Slavery Society, Most of Whom were Present at the Annual Meeting Held in Philadelphia and New York in May 1840*. The "Remark" on Bourne says:

Och, Geordie, my boy
Ye're a broth of a boy,
And truly the slaveholders dread:—

Faith! Give 'em a look,
Or shake at 'em "the 'Book'",
And sure, aint they nearly half dead,
Daddy Bourne
And sure aint they nearly half dead?

Would one dare to say that to a man who possessed neither
kindliness nor wit?

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GEORGE BOURNE
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CHAPTER I

BALTIMORE JOURNALIST

THE Reverend George Bourne was born June 13, 1780, in Westbury, Wiltshire, England. His father, Samuel Bourne, a manufacturer of cloth, was a man of some prominence and for thirty years was a deacon in the local Congregational church. He had a family of ten children.¹

George's ancestral lines included three men whose lives had exhibited notable independence and courage. His mother, Mary Rogers, was a lineal descendant of John Rogers, a convert of William Tyndale, one of the editors of the Matthews translation of the Bible, a prebendary and lecturer in divinity at St. Paul's, and the first Protestant martyr (February 4, 1555) of Bloody Mary's reign. His maternal grandmother, Mary Cotton, was a descendant of John Cotton, first Puritan minister in Boston. He was, also, the great-great-grandson of James Johnstown who suffered death at the cross in Glasgow in 1684 in defense of the Covenant and work of the Reformation.² This heritage of persecution for nonconformity may well have intensified Bourne's bitterness toward the Roman Catholic establishment, exhibited on many occasions but revealed specifically by the *Protestant* which he established in the winter of 1829-1830 in New York City.

Young Bourne thoroughly disliked business, an attitude which may have been responsible for a lack of good judgment in his own private business affairs later in life. He seemed to have a natural bent for journalism and preaching, and he

¹ Theodore Bourne, "George Bourne, the Pioneer of American Antislavery," *Methodist Quarterly Review*, LXIV (January, 1882), 71; George Bourne to William M. Engles, March 18, 1844, Shane Collection, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

² *Protestant*, January 30, 1830, March 12, 1831.

was sent to Homerton College, located in a suburb of London, where he completed a course of preparation for the Independent Congregational ministry. His education at this college included thorough training in Latin, Greek, Hebrew, church history, and logic. Whether this was an aid or a handicap to his work in later years depends upon one's point of view, because he wrote vigorously and exhorted mightily but not always with crystal clarity or complete candor.

While Bourne was in school, questions raised by Great Britain's involvement in the African slave trade and her toleration of Negro slavery in her colonies were being debated in Parliament and the press. His son, writing long after his father's death, said that he was keenly interested in this debate. He implies that his father participated in the debate, that his antipathy for slavery took its rise here, and that his antislavery ideas were fairly well developed before he came to America.³ There is some evidence which might tend to support this claim. Certain unusual words and phrases employed in the debates, particularly in references to slavery and evildoing in the prophetic and apocalyptic books of the Bible, were used by Bourne in almost everything he wrote on the subject.⁴ So peculiar to him were their use that their employment in any contemporary document inevitably suggests his authorship of it and thus furnishes important internal evidence in regard to his authorship of much anonymous antislavery literature. Nothing from Bourne himself, however, supports a youthful conversion to antislavery doctrine. Moreover, the article by his son is demonstrably inaccurate where it can be tested.

Bourne made a brief visit to the United States in 1802. He returned to England and on September 6, 1804, married an estimable young lady, whose name is not known, in St. James Church, Bristol. Shortly thereafter they came to the United States and settled in Baltimore, Maryland. Baltimore was a thriving city in a slave state. It was the most rapidly growing city in the country, already being third in size and fourth in

³ Bourne, "George Bourne," 72.

⁴ For example: promulged, promulging, promulgated, irrefragable, confuted, incarnadined, diurnal, arcana, caliginous, animadversion, croisade.

trade. This was a period of intense debate about slavery in this country as in England. The Quakers had renounced slavery. The abolition societies from the several states were holding annual meetings in Philadelphia. Every state north of Maryland and Delaware had abolished slavery by constitutional provision or had provided gradual emancipation by legislative act. The Constitution of the United States gave Congress a free hand in the matter of the foreign slave trade after 1807, and the Jefferson Administration was pressing for prohibition.⁵ The British Parliament was moving in the same direction.

In the United States, the roll of antislavery spokesmen had a formidable number of statesmen, philosophers, and humanitarians. Among the many were the humanitarian John Woolman and the teacher and pamphleteer Anthony Benezet, contemporaries of Granville Sharp and Thomas Clarkson in England. There were Samuel Hopkins and David Rice among the clergymen; the physician and philosopher Benjamin Rush; the statesmen George Mason, Thomas Jefferson, John Jay, Alexander Hamilton, Benjamin Franklin, James Wilson, and Rufus King; and, at that particular moment, the former slave trader turned writer, Thomas Branagan. Opposition to slavery was not the sole interest of these men, nor would it be correct to say that their indictment of slavery had fully covered the enormity of the institution's evil; however, they had laid a solid foundation of penetrating observations on which other men were about to launch a well organized crusade for social reform.⁶

Baltimore was the city to which William Lloyd Garrison came 25 years later as co-editor of Benjamin Lundy's *Genius of Universal Emancipation*, where he had access to Lundy's vast library of English and American antislavery literature, and where he learned the sharp reaction of slaveholders to any sort of criticism from a grand jury indictment and a term in jail. What Bourne's career would have been had he come to a free state must remain as problematical as the degree to which he

⁵ Dwight L. Dumond, *Antislavery: The Crusade for Freedom in America* (Ann Arbor, 1961), 16-25.

⁶ *Ibid.*, 26-52.

was acquainted with antislavery literature when he came. Maryland was a prosperous tobacco-growing state. Baltimore merchants were deeply involved in the buying and selling of Negroes in the markets of Maryland, Charleston, and the West Indies. Planters and merchants constituted a slaveholding aristocracy.

Slavery does not seem to have been of major or immediate concern to Bourne. He was under necessity to make a living, and made it, or tried to do so, first as a journalist and author and then as a preacher. Apparently he made no immediate effort to secure a position as clergyman but ventured into the newspaper publishing business without experience and in competition with three existing journals: the *Federal Gazette*, the *Telegraphe*, and the *Price Current*. He failed not from lack of ability to write but because, in those days before commercial advertising, a substantial subscription list was absolutely essential. The *Baltimore Evening Post*, published daily and tri-weekly, was established by John Cook and George Bourne and first published on March 25, 1805. Bourne became the sole publisher in August. He entered upon this independent venture with the following pronouncement:

The editor of the *Evening Post* seizes this opportunity to express his sense [of appreciation] of the support which this press has received since it was first established. It is unnecessary to repeat what will be its character in future—it will continue the steady defender of Christian truth against all species of infidelity—a firm supporter of “rights of man”—a steadfast adherent of the American Constitution—and the advocate of the rights of the many. When he is wrong he will be happy to be convinced—but when he is right he will persist—and in the defense of the laws of God, the laws of nature, and the laws by which social felicity is regulated and secured he will assist. The *Evening Post* will therefore be conducted as before with the addition of all the aid which the Editor can procure.

A glance at the columns of the *Evening Post* during Bourne's editorship reveals little that calls for comment. There is some political matter and much British correspondence. There is a tantalizing paucity of local news except that which deals with the arrival, the cargo, and the departure of ships. The most

interesting features are the advertisements. The issue of November 1, 1805, contains the catalogue of the prizes and the "gains of the wheel" on the 44th day of the Second Presbyterian Church Lottery. The enigmatic character of the editor, or the difficulty of editing in a slave state, or both, may well be indicated by the following advertisements:

For Sale: A likely Negro man, for the term of nine years who is now between 21 and 22 years of age.

Apply at the office of the *Evening Post*.

For Sale: For a term of years a Negro woman, aged about 25, with her female child, aged 9 years. The woman is a good cook and can do any kind of house work, will be sold reasonably, if applied for soon. Enquire at the office of the *Evening Post*.

One Hundred and Seventy-one Prime Negroes just arrived, and for sale by *William Boyd*, Charleston, who is always supplied with a large stock of *Human Flesh* for home consumption!!!!

One important item in the issues of the *Evening Post* was the announcement of British books and magazines for sale at the office. From this time to the end of his life, Bourne imported and sold British publications. It was one of the ways in which he eked out a precarious living when times were hard. The content of those books and magazines also kept him in continuous touch with the progress of the British antislavery movement.

Here was the partial source of Bourne's indoctrination with British antislavery principles which his son attributed to an earlier period of his life. In all of his Baltimore residence, where we have evidence of his developed antipathy to Roman Catholicism, there is not a sign of any hatred to, or even aversion for slavery, unless it is implied in the advertisements of Negroes for sale in the November 5, 1805, issue of his paper. This was two days before transfer of the paper to a new owner and editor. In spite of the high hopes and lofty claims of the youthful editor, the paper had failed to secure sufficient financial support, and the issue of November 14, 1805, announced: "This establishment was on the 7th inst. transferred to Mr. Hezekiah Niles. All debts due are left with me for settlement, and all claims will be attended to by the usual application at

the office." Accordingly, the issue of November 27 was published by Niles.⁷ Unfortunately, the lack of business judgment first exhibited in Bourne's newspaper venture was to prove an incurable defect. He was harrassed by debt from first to last throughout his life.

What, then, of the sale of slaves at the office of the newspaper as advertised two days before the transfer to Niles? Bourne later confessed to his close associate, A. B. Davidson, in Virginia that he had once "hired" a slave. This would have been impossible in England, and so it must have occurred in Baltimore. He was evidently in financial straits. He had shown no positive opposition to slavery. What more natural than to sell his slave or slaves? The man may have been used as a laborer at the newspaper office, the woman as a domestic servant. In any case, it was not until two or three years later, in Virginia, that Bourne underwent a gradual development of antislavery feeling. If he owned a slave at any time of his life, it must have been in Baltimore while editing the *Evening Post*.

Anticipating the failure of his newspaper, Bourne early embarked on the plan of publishing his first book. While editing the *Post*, he harvested from the exchange copies of other papers a respectable assortment of writings which he assembled and published as *The Spirit of Public Journals: or Beauties of the American Newspapers for 1805*. When a copy of the book appears today in a book list, it is usually described as having preserved articles from Western papers so scarce that their very names have well-nigh perished. Among these were the Chilli-cothe *Ohio Herald*, Pittsburg *Tree of Liberty*, Natchez *Mississippi Herald*, Vincennes *Indiana Gazette*, and Frankfort *Palladium*.

Before his *Spirit of the Public Journals* came from the press, Bourne had been invited by a group of publishers to write a life of Napoleon Bonaparte, who was at the height of his power in Europe. The participants in this unusual undertak-

⁷ Niles published the paper with Leonard Frailey until July, 1809, and then by himself for another two years. It ultimately became the *Sun*. Niles followed this venture in 1811 with the *Weekly Register* which became one of the most powerful newspapers in the country.

ing included some of the foremost publishers in the United States: Hezekiah Niles, Matthew Carey, Warner and Hanna, Samuel Butler, M. & J. Conrad, Anderson and Jeffries, and Dobbin and Murphy. That this group esteemed him competent for such a work proves he had already made a favorable impression on the publishing fraternity. The book was to be popular in style and hopefully a readable account of the man who appeared about to conquer all of Europe. The demand of the publishers was for haste, and without any reference to critical sources Bourne produced a satisfactory book within the year.⁸ It bore the title *The History of Napoleon Bonaparte: Emperor of the French and King of Italy*. There is no way of knowing the extent of its sales or of the financial return to the author, but he was now well launched on his career as a writer.

There was as yet no American life of John Wesley. The first Methodist Conference had been held in Baltimore. Quick to sense the opportunity presented by the popular interest in Methodism, the rapid increase in church membership, and the phenomenal career of the evangelist, Bourne wrote *The Life of Rev. John Wesley*. Though written in haste, it is a creditable account of the life and work of Wesley and of the doctrines and discipline of Methodism. It contains a table giving the annual statistics of preachers and members, both white and Negro, of that expanding Church. It had as its frontispiece an engraving of Wesley by Tiebout. The book is still useful and may be found on the shelves of many libraries.

Bourne's treatment in this volume of Wesley's attitude toward slavery gives pause once more to the historian and biographer. If he knew anything about antislavery doctrine or was to any degree familiar with the social philosophy of the humanitarians, then he had not read Wesley's writings or was a master of equivocation. Slavery is not dealt with in his biography except in one paragraph where he says of Wesley: "He wrote a great number of pamphlets on various subjects: among the best, one entitled *Thoughts on Slavery*. He was one of the earliest writers on this subject and has treated it in a moral and religious view, but with great spirit and impartiality."

⁸ *Baltimore Evening Post*, March 22, 1806.

Wesley was a friend of Anthony Benezet. He knew slavery first hand, but he borrowed heavily from Benezet when he wrote *Thoughts on Slavery*, a substantial pamphlet indeed and a powerful attack upon slavery and slaveholding. When one remembers that this is the document in which Wesley described slavery as "the sum of all villainies" and puts slaveholders in a class with thieves and murderers, Bourne's characterization of this tract is a magnificent understatement, to say the least. It had first been published in London in 1774 and had passed through several editions. In the conclusion of Wesley's biography published in 1806, Bourne for the first time manifested a violent dislike of the Roman Catholic Church.

It was also in 1806 that William Woodward of Philadelphia reprinted Thomas Scott's *Commentary on the Bible*, one of the books which Bourne may have acquired either from England or from Woodward. It was originally published in weekly installments in England between 1788 and 1792. It was strongly antislavery and denounced slavery as *men-stealing*. Scott's work was the greatest single British contribution to the movement in America and may be the source of Bourne's denunciation of slavery as a monumental sin and slaveholders as thieves because he made repeated references to it. It was widely used, not alone by ministers but by laymen. Angelina Grimké of Charleston owned a copy as a teen-age girl and knew it from cover to cover. Calling her attention to the moral issues as it did, the book probably was a greater influence upon her revolt against slavery than any other single source. It is also significant that it almost certainly came into Bourne's hands not later than his residence among slaveholders in Virginia nor earlier than the publication of the life of John Wesley.

His next publication, *Remarks upon a Pamphlet Entitled an Inquiry into the Validity of Methodist Episcopacy*, was an answer to a pamphlet by an Episcopal priest who had made some rather extensive and exclusive claims for the Protestant Episcopal Church as being "the sole true Church of God." Bourne's pamphlet was a vindication on historic grounds of the claims of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Although he says he had only a few days in which to write it, evidence of haste is not conspicuous. What is apparent are the ease and confi-

dence with which Bourne assembled and utilized the facts of church history, his command of the logic of debate, above all his sheer delight in controversy for its own sake. The publication mildly foreshadowed what he was capable of doing if sufficiently aroused. Deep-seated hostility to the Roman Catholic Church was again manifested in this pamphlet.

The last pamphlet Bourne wrote in Baltimore was entitled *The Case of Baptis Irvine in a Matter of Contempt of Court*. Irvine had published in his newspaper, the *Whig*, a political article which brought about his prosecution for contempt of court. Freedom of the press was of course involved. This was before the date of official printed reports of trials in the courts at Baltimore. Aware of the general interest in this case, Bourne, who was able to use shorthand, made arrangements to attend the trial and report it. He planned to publish his report, together with certain other relevant material including an essay on "Constructive Contempt of Court" written by an anonymous member of the bar. Bourne apparently was unaware until near the end of the trial that A. C. Hanson, of counsel for the state, was likewise gathering material for a pamphlet report of his own. Bourne was an ardent advocate of complete freedom for the press. Hanson as vigorously opposed its unrestrained license.

The Hanson family had long been prominent in public affairs. John Hanson (1721-1783) had been president of the Congress under the Articles of Confederation. His son, Alexander Contee Hanson (1749-1806), had been private secretary to George Washington, judge of the General Court of Maryland, and compiler of the Laws of Maryland. His son, Alexander Contee Hanson (1786-1819), was the man engaged in this controversy with Bourne. The *Whig* had been established September 24, 1807, reputedly by prominent Federalists with Baptis Irvine as editor. Hanson founded on July 4, 1808, the *Federal Republican and Commercial Gazette* and made it the organ of bitter opposition to President Madison and the war with England. Bitterness engendered by the war resulted in rioting and destruction of Hanson's press. Federalist reaction later sent him to Congress.

Bourne, despite his previous ambitious efforts, was still an

impecunious hack, eager to write on any cause that enlisted his temperamental enthusiasm and promised to furnish financial reward. He had been engaged for some time in the preparation of a history of the United States during Thomas Jefferson's administration. He wrote to President Jefferson on March 14, 1808, asking permission to dedicate the book to him and saying that the materials and documents were "in a considerably forward state of arrangement."⁹ One month later his proposal to publish by subscription this history with its dedication to President Jefferson was inserted in the *Evening News* and the *Evening Post*. He wrote to President James Madison, April 22, 1809, asking permission to put his name at the head of the subscription list and "to introduce a portrait of Madison as an acceptable present to the purchasers of the work."¹⁰ No explanation has ever come to light of Bourne's failure to publish the book, but the controversy between Bourne and Hanson at the time of Irvine's trial cannot be divorced from the mounting bitterness between critics and supporters of administration foreign policy. Neither rivalry in reporting nor clashing personalities could of themselves have carried the men to such lengths of personal abuse. Neither of them would turn a hand to avoid a controversy or its concomitant publicity.

Irvine's counsel requested Bourne's notes of the trial for correction by the prosecution. Bourne refused to comply and charged that an attempt was being made to discredit his report as inaccurate and biased in favor of the defendant. "I defy," he wrote, "any person to discover a single argument weakened, a single sentiment falsified, or any one opinion imputed to a speaker, to which he has not a legal claim." Whatever the basis for his charge of chicanery, he was to some degree setting up a straw man and then tearing it down to his own advantage. The *Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* carried advertisements of both Hanson's and Bourne's publications on March 22, 1808. Bourne's pamphlet was presented as a faithful report of the case of Baptis Irvine in a matter of contempt of court, with a narrative of all the preliminary circum-

⁹ Jefferson Papers, Library of Congress.

¹⁰ Madison Papers, Library of Congress.

stances, the arguments of the counsel, the decision of the Court, the reply of the Governor to the application for the Editor's release from jail, and an essay on constructive contempt of court . . . the only authentic and genuine report which can be published.

Hanson's report, announced for publication three days later but actually published the following day, was said to be the only one which could be relied upon because the members of counsel had revised their own arguments for publication.¹¹

Bourne clearly had the stronger position on this point of accuracy, providing, of course, there had been no inaccuracies in the process of recording and translating his own shorthand, but he seriously weakened his position. Hanson's pamphlet presented the facts of the case and the arguments in a light most favorable to the prosecution, while Bourne's pamphlet was outspokenly on Irvine's side. Their content differed widely. Each contained material not to be found in the other. In particular, Bourne's production contained on page 46, as promised, a lengthy "Essay on Constructive Contempt of Court" by an unnamed member of the bar which ended as follows:

Immediately after the sentence of the Court was pronounced, a statement of the whole case, with an application for Baptis Irvine's release from jail, founded upon the unconstitutionality of the proceeding, was sent to the governor: the following reply was received from him: and it ought to be held in lasting remembrance: whether we consider the inaccuracy of the statement, the want of *argument, the opposition to the trial by jury, the most excellent bad grammar and the ineligance of the style* which characterize the whole production. *Sed nemo omnibus horis sapit.*

This paragraph was neither a part of the essay nor of the Governor's reply but Bourne's violently critical comment on the Governor's letter, printed at this point, curiously enough without a break in paragraphing or punctuation, in such a way that the casual reader would think from its appearance that it

¹¹ A. C. Hanson, *An Accurate Report of the Argument, on a Motion of Attachment, against Baptis Irvine, Editor of the Whig, for a Contempt against the Court of Oyer and Terminer for Baltimore County* (Baltimore, 1808).

was an integral part of the essay on constructive contempt. The author of that essay disclaimed responsibility.

It is possible that haste in order to bring this report out before the publication of Hanson's report was the cause of a serious mistake in the arrangement of paragraphs. Even that charitable supposition, however, in no way acquits Bourne of the extraordinary and rash harshness of the charges he brought against the Governor for doing what he conceived to be his duty, and a reading of the Governor's letter itself discloses none of the grievous shortcomings alleged. For publishing this paragraph anywhere in his report, it is impossible to acquit Bourne of possessing and exhibiting a partisan spirit so bitter that it blinded him to the facts of the case, a contempt for the Governor both as a man and as the highest officer of the state, and an utter disregard of the consequences to himself of such unfounded charges.

Bourne's insecurity at this point embraced something more than poverty. The Governor was not likely to take note of ill-tempered language by an obscure pamphleteer, but, on the local scene, Bourne had challenged professionals in the manner of political infighting. Notice of publication in the form of advertisements of both Bourne's and Hanson's pamphlets had appeared in the *Baltimore American and Commercial Daily Advertiser* on March 22, 1808. The *Federal Gazette* and the *North American* carried on that same day the following advertisement of serious import under the caption "Query":

If a man acts as treasurer of a debating society, the money raised by which is to be appropriated to charitable purposes, and instead of applying the money so raised as directed by the society, he embezzles and converts to his own use, and by plausible falsehoods produces a belief that he paid it over—is this an indictable offense? The Grand Jury is now sitting—I understand their opinion will be taken upon the subject.

This query was carefully drawn. It made no direct charge, and it named no names. It was, however, Hanson's work and was aimed at Bourne who had in 1806 been treasurer of the Forensic Society. Bourne was quick to answer Hanson's

charge.¹² Under the two-fold caption "Low morality by Alexander C. Hanson, Esq., One of the Council of the State" and "Mr. Hanson's Delicacy by Peter K. Wagner, Printer of the North American," he caused to be reprinted on March 25 in both the *Federal Gazette* and the *North American* the query of Hanson and the following reply:

I applied to Mr. Hewes [of the *Federal Gazette*] and to Mr. Wagner [of the *North American*] for [the name of] the author. Mr. Hewes informed me that Mr. A. C. Hanson was the author. Mr. Wagner assumed the responsibility himself. The only reply I have to make to this Query is the following certificate—'I certify that Mr. William Gwynn, president of the Society, gave order directing George Bourne, Secretary of that Society, to pay me, as secretary of the Impartial Free School Society, the sum of 50 dollars and 90 four cents, which that order specified to be the balance of the funds in his hands. Which balance had been voted for the benefit of the Impartial Free School by the Forensic Society. This sum was paid to me on the seventeenth day of June 1806 by an order from George Bourne upon Captain Phelan, which sum I hereby acknowledge to have received from Captain Phelan in full on this day. Signed Kezie Norris

Baltimore, March 24, 1808.'

Had not Mr. Hanson taken great pains to propagate this story expressly to injure me I should not have noticed it—but as he has asserted this lie of me, *I most solemnly denounce A. C. Hanson and Peter K. Wagner malicious slanderers and liars.*

George Bourne

The argument was no longer rational. Many a duel had been fought and many a one was yet to be fought in the slave country over lesser charges of improper conduct. It seems hardly possible that Bourne's final outburst could have been wholly ignored by Hanson or forgotten by the public at large. Yet, the historian finds no evidence on which to base conclusions. After a few months, Hanson, an officer in the state

¹² *Baltimore Evening Post*, March 25, 28, 1808; *American and Commercial Advertiser*, March 26, April 1, 1808.

militia, was court-martialed for extreme criticism of the President in his *Federal Republican*, and as the country drifted toward war with England, Baltimore drifted toward the bloody riots of 1812 in which Hanson's newspaper was destroyed and in which Hanson almost lost his life at the hands of infuriated Republicans. Some time after the newspaper controversy with Hanson, Bourne left Baltimore with his family and went to the little hamlet of New Glasgow in Amherst County, Virginia, about a dozen miles south of Lexington. After a brief season there, he moved to Port Republic, 12 miles south of Harrisonburg in Rockingham County, and then to Harrisonburg.

While it is not possible to determine exact dates of Bourne's movements, this was about 1810. Virginia, as all of the slave states, had been losing persons opposed to slavery to Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois in particular but to all of the free states in some degree. Elihu Embree of Tennessee said there were thousands opposed to slavery who went to the three states north of the Ohio River before 1820. Virginia had lost David Rice at an early date. Many Quakers from Hopewell, Virginia, had settled in Ross County, Ohio, center of the Chillicothe Presbytery in 1798. Six families of Germans, all Baptists, had left Rockingham County, the very area to which Bourne migrated, and settled at Lancaster, Ohio, in 1801, simply because life had been made miserable for them by slaveholding Baptists in the community. These are only examples of the way in which slave states, Virginia and Tennessee in particular, were becoming more defensive on the question of slavery as the demand for slaves in the Southwest increased.

CHAPTER II

SOUTH TO THE LAND OF SLAVERY

FROM the city of Baltimore to the beautiful Shenandoah Valley, from editing a newspaper to teaching school and preaching, and from bitter controversy and political turmoil to the most respected and personally rewarding pursuits of man could have been the perfect sequence of events in Bourne's life, but his life fell short of that particular fulfillment because neither in the pulpit nor in the schoolroom was it possible to ignore the evil of slavery. One might defend it or learn to live within the framework of its restraints but not ignore it.

John M. Nelson of Hillsborough, Ohio, who had been born and reared in Augusta County, Virginia, said that "about the year 1809 or '10, I became a student of Rev. George Bourne; he was the first abolitionist I had ever seen, and the first I had ever heard pray or plead for the oppressed, which gave me the first misgivings about the *innocence* of slaveholding."¹ This testimony of Nelson given 30 years after the event is the first clear evidence of active antislavery effort on the part of Bourne. Finding himself among a group of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians 12 miles from Harrisonburg, he started preaching to them and shortly gathered them into a congregation. They had recently come to America, were moving South and West, and had never had any use for slavery. Bourne was undergoing a gradual development of antislavery feeling under the influence of what he saw of the cruelty and wickedness of slavery as it was in Virginia at that time and as a result also of discussions with the members of his congregation.

¹ "Testimony of John M. Nelson—A Native of Virginia," in Theodore D. Weld, *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York, 1839), 52.

Bourne, on October 16, 1811, applied to the Presbytery of Lexington to be taken into their membership. The Presbytery, meeting at Staunton, hesitated, resumed consideration of his request two days later, and finally postponed positive action until an investigation could be made of "certain allegations unfriendly to Mr. Bourne's moral character" which had been "extensively circulated."² There is no clue whatever as to the nature of the charges. It would appear that the charges first presented against Bourne, whatever their nature may have been, had come originally from Baltimore and that his detractors there either had lost interest in his fortunes or had become too deeply involved in their own problems to pursue the matter further or that the bearer of tales to New Glasgow had moved on to the West. Bourne, however, was never destined for a life of serenity.

The Presbytery met at New Providence Church on April 24, 1812, and wrote the following conclusion into its minutes:

Mr. George Bourne having informed Pby. that he was a preacher from the Independent Churches of England [licensed London, 1804], renewed his application to be received as a Candidate under the call of this Body; it appeared to the satisfaction of Pby. that Mr. Bourne's situation was considerably changed since our last meeting. Mr. Bourne and Mr. [The Rev. A. B.] Davidson had applied to a Session in the neighborhood of New Glasgow to have the charges against his character in that quarter investigated. Pby. was also informed that some of Mr. Bourne's evidences [witnesses] had left the state of Virginia and that nearly two years have elapsed since those charges were made. Mr. Bourne has resided 18 months in a vacant part of our bounds; under his preaching a Congregation has been formed and his ministrations especially of late have been zealous, laborious, apparently very much blessed; and that the cause of religion in that neighborhood was very much interested in his immediate reception. Wherefore, resolved, that Mr. Bourne's request be granted and that he be received under the care of Pby, as a Candidate.

² Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, Staunton, October 8, 1811, Union Theological Seminary Library, Richmond.

Accordingly, Bourne was examined as to his acquaintance with and views of the doctrines and government of the Presbyterian Church, and his examination was sustained. On the next day it was announced:

The Pby. having received sufficient testimonials in favor of George Bourne, of his literary attainments, of good moral character and of his being in the communion of the church, and he having adopted the Confession of Faith of this church, and satisfactorily answered the questions appointed to be put to Candidates to be licensed, the Pby. did and hereby do license him the said George Bourne, to preach the Gospel of Christ as a probationer for the Gospel Ministry within the bounds of this Pby., or wherever he shall be orderly called.³

He was appointed to preach in the churches that were without pastors in Rockingham and Augusta counties until the autumn meeting of the Presbytery.

Every candidate for ordination in the Presbyterian Church was required to accept the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Larger and Shorter Catechism with such changes and amendments as had been made in them. As Bourne had studied the Constitution preparatory to adopting it, an unexpected antislavery statement had held his attention. It was a note appended to the word *manstealing* in the answer to Question 142 in the Larger Catechism. The question was: "What are the sins forbidden in the eighth commandment?" The answer was comprehensive, including "theft, robbery, man-stealing and receiving anything that is stolen. . . ." This was, in itself, a condemnation of the slave system in its entirety as Bourne always claimed, regardless of notes, but the note, added as all notes were after the original Constitution was adopted, was thorough and specific:

"I. Tim. i, 10 (The law is made) for whoremongers, for them that defile themselves with mankind, for men-stealers. (This crime among the Jews exposed the perpetrators of it to capital punishment; Exod. 21, 16 and the apostle here classes them with sinners of

³ Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, New Providence, April 24, 25, 1812.

the first rank. The word he uses in its original import, comprehends all who are concerned in bringing any of the human race into slavery, or in detaining them in it. . . . Stealers of men are all those who bring off slaves or freemen, and keep, sell, or buy them. To steal a freeman, says Grotius, is the highest kind of theft. In other instances we only steal human property, but when we steal or retain men in slavery, we seize those who in common with ourselves, are constituted by the original grant, lords of the earth. Gen: 1, 28 *vid. Poli synopsis in loc.*)⁴

This note, so far as Bourne knew, was a part of the official Constitution of the Presbyterian Church. It had deeply impressed him as containing the fundamental truth that slavery was manstealing, a sin worthy of death. It was, of course, in perfect harmony with Bourne's evolving attitude toward slavery and confirmed him in his decision to admit no slaveholders to membership in his church at Port Republic.

It was not discussed in his examination, but it was to play a large part in his experience as a Presbyterian minister. Unfortunately for him this note on the word *manstealers*, true though it was as a statement, had not been given the second of the two votes required to validate any amendment to the Constitution, that is, the approval of the presbyteries voting separately after it had received the vote of approval of the General Assembly. Consequently legally it was not a part of the text of the Constitution although what it contained was entirely true. In subsequent editions it had been printed without any indication that it had not been properly made a part of the Constitution. It must be remembered, however, that the answer to Question 142 itself condemned slavery though not in language as explicit was that of the note. The existence of the note by virtue of incorrect procedure enabled the slave power in the Assembly to avoid the larger issue by focusing attention upon the note and its subsequent removal.

⁴ *The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America, Containing the Confession of Faith, The Catechisms, and the Directory for the Worship of God: Together with the Plan of Government and Discipline as Amended and Ratified by the General Assembly at Their Sessions in May, 1805* (Philadelphia, 1806), 277-278.

The congregation at Port Republic numbered 36 members and was officially known as the South River Church. The call to become pastor of this church was presented to Bourne at the meeting of the Presbytery at Tinkling Spring Church, October 29, 1812. The Presbytery then met at Bourne's church on Christmas Day, 1812, listened to a sermon by him entitled *The Majesty and Condescension of God*, with II Chronicles 6:18 as its text, examined him in church government and ecclesiastical history, found everything to its satisfaction, and appointed his ordination for the following day. Bourne was ordained and installed as pastor of the South River Church by the Presbytery, meeting at the home of Jacob Barger, with the Reverend John McCue of the Tinkling Spring Church delivering the ordination sermon and the Reverend William Wilson of the Augusta Church presiding.⁵

The reception of a man who had achieved so interesting a reputation as an author must have gratified the Presbytery. They sent him as their Commissioner to the General Assembly in Philadelphia in May, 1813, and again in April, 1814. They chose him to preach the installation sermon of the Reverend Conrad Speece as pastor of the Augusta Church when the Reverend William Wilson retired. They elected him Clerk of the Presbytery in October, 1814. These and several other engagements brought him into contact with a number of the leaders in Virginia and inevitably left him conscious of the new attention his words commanded and the high regard in which he was held by his associates at that time. Yet, that note in the Catechism stood as a barrier to permanent accord. Bourne's antislavery views, powerfully reinforced by doctrinal authority, were fully matured by what he saw and heard about his associates in the Presbytery. He was shocked that they should flagrantly violate the rules of the Church, and they in turn were appalled by the violence of his denunciation. Some did not know of the note in the Catechism, and he was not aware that it had been put there by improper procedure. They did know or should have known that Question and Answer 142

⁵ Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, Tinkling Spring Church, October 29, 1812, South River Church, Port Republic, December 25, 1812.

and the Bible itself condemned "menstealing." Bourne knew it and tried without success to keep subsequent argument focused upon it.

Early in Bourne's residence in Augusta County, a young minister by the name of A. B. Davidson, a year younger than Bourne and a graduate of Washington College, became pastor of the Presbyterian churches at Harrisonburg, Mossy Creek, and New Erection. He and Bourne became close friends, a relationship which was to prove important for both of them. Davidson's uncle, Andrew Baker, an elder in the Buffalo Church in Hanover Presbytery, had established in 1797 a charitable fund. Its interest was to be used for three purposes: the education of poor and pious youths for the ministry, the support of missionaries, and the distribution of religious books. He had designated his nephew, A. B. Davidson, the first recipient of this money when Davidson was a student at Washington College. Davidson was still receiving the money when he met Bourne.

A few months before Bourne was installed, his friend Davidson had been sent by the Presbytery to represent it at the General Assembly of 1811 in Philadelphia. As a young man associating for the first time with leaders of the church, he was much impressed by the emphasis they placed on the crying need for more tract and Bible societies. He came away fired with the purpose of trying to start one in Harrisonburg, and he proposed that Bourne join him in establishing the Virginia Tract Society. To give their new members material for prompt distribution, they bought four sets of tracts (2000 to a set) from Isaac Collett, the Staunton printer, and sent their members out with them. The Tract Society needed two more tracts to complete a volume of six tracts which they proposed to combine with their annual report and sell for the benefit of the society. At the first annual meeting on October 30, 1812, it had 250 members who had paid one dollar each for their membership.

Davidson and Bourne formed a partnership, bought a good hand press, and imported a printer, Lawrence Wartmann. They established what they called the Theological Printing Office in Harrisonburg. They printed the two needed tracts and a small book written by Bourne entitled, *Marriage Indissoluble*

and *Divorce Unscriptural*, and started a canvass to secure subscribers for an important book entitled, *The Mountain Muse*. This latter book, a poem in Miltonic meter, contained an account of the adventures of Daniel Boone, a frontier hero among his contemporaries in all the South. It was written by Daniel Bryan, Boone's nephew, who had been able to include in his poem some material not hitherto in print about his uncle. This book was a well-bound volume of 252 pages. The last copies printed had 12 additional pages of a subscription list which recorded the names of more than 1400 subscribers from ten states and the District of Columbia (Henry Clay was one of them). Their orders required the printing of about 1800 copies. It is possible that Davidson, who had been in Washington College about the same time that Bryan was there, secured this order and that the order made the purchase of the press and employment of the printer necessary. The work on this book was so heavy that Bourne moved from Port Republic to Harrisonburg and worked part time at the press.

He was regularly preaching in his little Port Republic church and in addition doing some evangelistic work in the country. On one of these excursions in very bad weather he contracted a heavy cold. As its after-effect he lost much of his hearing and to the end of his life suffered from deafness. This to a man engaging in frequent debate was a handicap which often caused him to lose his temper. Bourne's reputation had been vastly advanced by the phenomenal sale of *The Mountain Muse*. Because of his success with the tract society, he was invited in May, 1813, to participate in the founding of the Virginia Bible Society in Richmond.

A gradual development of antislavery attitude and action on the part of Bourne is the only plausible explanation of how he could have kept his popularity with fellow members in Presbytery and been advanced by them to serve as delegate to repeated General Assemblies and to the Clerkship of his Presbytery, the highest office in the Presbytery which a man can hold, year after year. The six crucial years in this development of Bourne's philosophy were 1809 to 1815, the date of his teaching as attested by Nelson to the date of a violent attack upon slavery in the General Assembly in Philadelphia.

Bourne's real troubles began in 1815 when he was selected for the third time to represent his Presbytery at the Presbyterian General Assembly. But as the Assembly met it took an interesting action affecting Bourne. The whole Presbyterian Church was deeply interested in securing money and books to strengthen their infant theological seminary at Princeton. The previous General Assembly had appointed a large committee representing the entire church to collect money. By some oversight several presbyteries were not represented on this committee; therefore, early in its session the Assembly added several men to it including Bourne. This appointment is clear proof that up to this time nothing Bourne had done had roused any serious resentment against him on the part of his brethren.

Bourne *had* excluded slaveholders from membership in his own church, and he went to the General Assembly in 1815 carrying an overture, or question of doctrine, to be presented. He and some of his elders had prepared a question asking whether members of the Church who retained people of color in slavery could be Christians. The Synod of Ohio sent a second question to the Assembly asking whether men who moved into that state while they retained and rented their slaves in Virginia, or exchanged them for land, could be honest men, or Presbyterians, or even Christians in the light of the antislavery note in the Constitution. The chairman of the business committee, Dr. William Hill of Winchester, Virginia, one of Bourne's neighbors, refused to give a place on the docket to Bourne's overture, and Bourne himself brought it up from the floor as was his right. He spoke in what was described as a very excited manner, was heckled and accused of misrepresentation and exaggeration, and became vehement.

In introducing the overture, he read the antislavery note from the Catechism. It was the first public use of it in a General Assembly. A number of Bourne's friends among the clergy in Virginia owned slaves. It was his belief, borne out by observation, that they treated their slaves about the same as everyone else, which was with some cruelty. Later enumeration of names and incidents substantiate this ill-treatment. Slaveholding was cruel business however one looks at it. On this occasion, however, Bourne was primarily interested in a

decision by the General Assembly regarding slaveholding by members of the Church, with particular reference to ministers and elders, in view of their professed adoption, *at the time of their ordination*, of the articles in the Constitution of the Church which condemned manstealing. He stated facts which obviously were well known to their neighbors in localities where they lived. He would not name the parties involved, however, because it would be difficult to return home in any case and quite impossible if he made personal charges against anyone. The end result was not much different. They had either ignored the authority of the Catechism, forgotten the pertinent answer and note, never seriously read the document, or rejected the interpretation of slavery as manstealing. Naming the preachers who owned slaves and were guilty of offences enumerated by Bourne could not have angered them much more than his broadside indictment which placed them all under suspicion.

That Bourne named no names in his accusations created several problems for the accused. No one of them, had he happened to be present, would have dared to attempt an answer. His case would have been lost the moment he admitted that he had recognized himself in Bourne's searing description. The accused, therefore, were compelled to be content with roundly condemning him as a liar. But the net result of the unseemly brawl was not helpful to his cause. Active and vindictive retaliation was merely postponed.

The full details of what was said in the Assembly, in private conversations, and among members of Bourne's church and in Presbytery are not known, but there are considerable data from the records of the Presbytery, from contributions to the *Liberator*, from Bourne's own books, and from the famous, and one must say, amazingly accurate book of Theodore Dwight Weld, *American Slavery As It is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses*.

Bourne said, with reference to proceedings in the Assembly: Never was the Devil more dumb; not a man even attempted to defend man-thieving boldly but Mr. [William] Hill of Winchester. Severer censures upon slavery were never heard than those which

were stated in the Assembly. Mr. Mervin, of Connecticut, moved that every slaveholder or slave-hirer should, *ipso facto*, be declared not a Christian or a member of the church.⁶

The fact remained, however, that the majority was on the other side.

William Hill said at a much later date, in sworn testimony before the Presbytery:

During the discussion of this question, Mr. Bourne indulged himself in the most unqualified abuse of slaveholders. He said it was impossible to conceive the horrors of slavery as practiced in Virginia even by members of the Church and Ministers themselves.

Hill then recounted some of the incidents Bourne had related in support of his accusation and stated that when asked to name those to whom he alluded:

He positively refused, saying he well knew the persecution and trouble he should involve himself in, when he returned to Virginia, should he venture to give up names. . . . He was then asked why he did not arraign these persons before the proper tribunal and bring them to justice. He replied that it was in vain to try to bring them to justice in Virginia for they were all alike guilty, and justice for such acts of cruelty, could not be had there. . . . He said that Religion in the part of the country where he lived was in a most deplorable state. The lives of Professors, with very few exceptions indeed, were such as to open the mouths of adversaries and to make Infidelity to triumph—that professed Christians could not parry at all, for when they attempted it they were fast choked, for they had a Negro stuck fast in their throats.⁷

The final answer of the Assembly to charges, countercharges, and overtures, in short, its position on the issue of slavery, fully satisfied no one. The debate in this General Assembly of 1815 was the beginning of a cleavage that widened and deepened through the years. Previous general assemblies were

⁶ George Bourne to A. B. Davidson, July 28, 1815, Gratz Collection, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

⁷ Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, Winchester, November 21, 1817.

said to have expressed regret over the continuance of slavery, especially among members of the Church. In spite of this, there continued to be wide differences of opinion. The Assembly, therefore, urged all members to live in charity and peace among themselves and to provide religious instruction, at least for the young slaves, in preparation for liberty "when God in his providence may open a door for their emancipation." It recognized the need sometimes to transfer and move slaves but condemned the commercial slave trade. It deplored undue severity of treatment and recommended to Presbyteries "the use of all prudent measures to prevent such shameful and unrighteous conduct." Bourne denounced the action of the Assembly as "deceptive and two-faced" because all previous action of the General Assembly had been entirely futile. Church members, including preachers and elders, he insisted, had continued to buy, sell, work, starve, and flay their slaves even more shamefully than their infidel and irreligious neighbors. To talk of living in Christian charity and peace with that sort of people was sheer sophistry or worse. According to the Confession of Faith and previous decisions of the General Assembly, every slaveholder who pretended to be a Christian was a staunch hypocrite who ought *de facto* to be excluded from the Church.⁸

The blow had fallen. Bourne's former friends were now his enemies. His views had become intolerable to slaveholders. Stealing was a nasty, low-down, common sin. How could anybody charge a Presbyterian minister or elder with that kind of sin? It simply enraged them. They knew what it meant, though it is doubtful whether the full membership of the Assembly grasped the enormity of the charge. Manstealing! In the Bible and in the Constitution of the Church! The term had been used by earlier writers and orators on rare occasions but never as Bourne used it. It was so important to Bourne that it seemed almost to have become an obsession. It is on page after page of his writings until the very end of his life. It is his trademark, and he gave it to Garrison, to Weld, to the cause itself. It was an original and effective contribution, perhaps his most important.

⁸ Bourne to Davidson, July 28, 1815, Gratz Collection.

Stealing is a *sin*, a *personal sin* requiring an article, a thief, and a victim. It cannot be dealt with like cruelty in slaveholding. That was a matter one could deal with in mass or could just refuse to consider when trying to bring a slaveholder to face his faults. Stealing was another matter. If you could fasten theft on a man, it was clearly sin, and it could not be brushed off as inherited from one's ancestors. It is personal and presently active sin for which one could not escape responsibility. No more claim to ancestral burdens! No more excuses of participating in a civilizing process! Bourne could not have wielded a more powerful weapon. It was not just an idea or a point of argument; it was a mighty contribution to antislavery, because the later organized movement in its early years emphasized first, last, and always the *sin* of slavery. The sin of slavery was never overshadowed by any other indictment.

The identification of slaveholding as manstealing made the ministers and elders furious, vindictive, and determined not to stop short of getting the note to Question 142 out of the Constitution of the Church. This was accomplished by the General Assembly of 1816 without difficulty because of the irregularity of its adoption, but removal was a futile gesture. Stealing is depriving a person of something which belongs to him. Slavery deprived a person of the use of his own body and the right to property, relatives, freedom, to learn, to make decisions and moral judgments, to move about, and to aspire to better things. Depriving another of these possessions was stealing. No other word so nearly describes what a slave owner did and continued to do every day of his life. He alone was guilty. He must desist, make restitution, and accept punishment. Such was the law of man and of God.

The antislavery movement became something different after Bourne's attack. His *manstealing* constituted a weapon capable of infinite damage or total destruction to slavery. Antislavery protagonists thereafter occupied new ground. Hitherto slavery had been described largely as an inherited evil. Slaves had been looked upon as ignorant and unfit for freedom, by some people as subhuman. Emancipation would be dangerous. Slavery must be continued until a civilizing process was complete. Gradualism was the predominant idea. Possessing slaves was

participation in the necessary preliminary step, not to be reprobated. Individual slaveholders could not be condemned.

If slavery were stealing, and the Larger Catechism, even without the note, said as much, the position of the slaveholder was entirely changed. Stealing was a personal sin, and holding slaves was an individual personal offense rather than an inherited impersonal evil. It required personal and immediate abandonment with repentance and restitution where possible. It was this identification of slavery with stealing by Bourne which made the hatred of his enemies complete. The sin of slavery and the immediate emancipation of the victims were inseparable, but far beyond these and equally inseparable from both was the inescapable condemnation of the slaveholder by ministers of the Gospel as a sinner of the first rank. Bourne identified slavery with stealing in 1815. Garrison identified slavery with stealing only after he read Bourne's book fifteen years later. Garrison, however, has long been credited with the thought.

CHAPTER III

TALES OF HUMAN FRAILTY

WHAT were these tales of reprehensible conduct on the part of his ministerial associates which Bourne related at the meeting of the General Assembly in 1815? Slaveholding of course because that was what the Catechism forbade and what Bourne assailed, but everyone *knew* they were slaveholders so there must have been more substantial reason for Bourne's reluctance to deal in personalities and the ministers' studied silence about specifics when giving testimony. One cannot escape the fact that many years passed before Bourne unburdened his soul completely, and they were years of intense suffering and vexation. Either he feared further injustice, or he showed remarkable Christian forbearance. In either case, his opponents in his Presbytery were able to maintain a show of personal rectitude while expressing indignation that Bourne had brought the entire Presbyterian ministry in Virginia into disrepute by refusal to enter into details. Such was the manner in which the main issue was confounded. In the General Assembly and in Bourne's trial in the Presbytery, the greater sin of manstealing was subordinated to the lesser evil of abuse of power.

For the rest of his life, Bourne illustrated his antislavery articles and books with observations made during his Virginia residence. Some of them he told over and over again with very little variation in their details. Until 1839, he never named the "slavites" whose misdeeds he described. In that year, however, at the author's request, he contributed to Theodore D. Weld's powerful book *American Slavery As It Is* the same stories he had used for 25 years but identified each of the characters by name. These names provide the explanation not only of the charges made against Bourne but of the unrelenting

animosity with which his antagonists pursued him for three years until they secured his deposition from the ministry in 1818. The stories, as told by Bourne in Weld's book, are as follows:

Benjamin Lewis, who was an elder in the Presbyterian church engaged a carpenter to repair and enlarge his house. After some time had elapsed, Kyle, the builder, was awakened very early in the morning by a most piteous moaning and shrieking. He arose, and following the sound, discovered a colored woman nearly naked, tied to a fence, while Lewis was lacerating her. Kyle instantly commanded the slavedriver to desist. Lewis maintained his jurisdiction over his slaves, and threatened Kyle that he would punish him for his interference. Finally Kyle obtained the release of the victim. A second and third scene of the same kind occurred, and on the third occasion the altercation almost produced a battle between the elder and the carpenter. Kyle immediately arranged his affairs, packed up his tools and prepared to depart. 'Where are you going?' demanded Lewis. 'I am going home,' said Kyle. 'Then I will pay you nothing for what you have done,' retorted the slave driver, 'unless you complete your contract.' The carpenter went away with this edifying declaration, 'I will not stay here a day longer for I expect the fire of God will come down and burn you up altogether, and I do not choose to go to hell with you.' Through hush money and promises not to whip the women any more, I believe Kyle returned and completed his engagement. James Kyle of Harrisonburg, Virginia, frequently narrated that circumstance, and his son, the carpenter, confirmed it with all the minute particulars combined with his temporary residence on the Shenandoah river.¹

Benjamin Lewis was an elder in the South River Church. He was summoned as a witness against Bourne on the charge of wilful departure from the truth, September 1, 1817, but apparently did not testify.

Bourne's narrative continued:

John McCue of Augusta County, Virginia, a *Presbyterian preacher*, frequently on the Lord's day morning, tied up his slaves

¹ Theodore D. Weld, *American Slavery As It Is: Testimony of a Thousand Witnesses* (New York, 1839), 178.

and whipped them; and left them bound, while he went to the meeting house and preached—and after his return home repeated his scourging. That fact, with others more heinous, was known to all persons in his congregation and around the vicinity; and so far from being censured for it, he and his brethren justified it as essential to preserve their 'domestic institutions.'²

The Reverend John McCue, somewhat over 60 years of age at the time, was pastor of Tinkling Spring Church from 1791 to 1818. He had preached the sermon at Bourne's ordination, December 26, 1812. He was a witness, also a judge, at Bourne's trial.

The third part of Bourne's narrative in Weld's book referred to a Mrs. John Pence. She and her husband had been cited as witnesses at the trial, November 21, 1817, but were not called. Wrote Bourne:

Mrs. Pence of Rockingham County, Virginia, used to boast,—'I am the best hand to whip a *wench* in the whole county.' She used to pinion the girls to a post in the yard on the Lord's day morning, scourge them, put on the 'negro plaster,' salt, pepper, and vinegar, leave them tied, and walk away to church as demure as a nun, and after service repeat her flaying, if she felt the whim. I once expostulated with her upon her cruelty. 'Mrs. Pence, how can you whip your girls so publicly and disturb your neighbors so on the Lord's day morning?' Her answer was memorable. 'If I were to whip them on any other day I should lose a day's work, but by whipping them on Sunday, their backs get well enough by Monday morning.' That woman, if alive, is doubtless a member of the Church now, as then.³

The Reverend William Wilson, 64 years of age, had retired in 1813 after a pastorate of more than 30 years in the Augusta Church. He died in 1835 shortly after Bourne published his *Picture of Slavery* without naming him and before his account in Weld's *American Slavery As It Is*. He had presided at Bourne's installation December 26, 1812. Bourne said in his report:

² *Ibid.*

³ *Ibid.*, 179-180.

William Wilson, a Presbyterian preacher of Augusta County, Virginia, had a young colored girl who was constitutionally unhealthy. As no means to amend her were availing, he sold her to a member of his congregation, and in the usual style of human flesh dealers, warranted her 'sound.' The fraud was instantly discovered, but he would not refund the amount. A suit was commenced, and was long continued, and finally the plaintiff recovered the money out of which he had been swindled by slave-trading with his own preacher. No Presbytery censured him, although Judge Brown, the Chancellor, severely condemned the imposition.⁴

Bourne's account continued with a story of slave trading coupled with an attempt at face-saving by Alexander Nelson, an elder in the Augusta Church, a magistrate, and the owner of about 20 slaves, at whose home the preachers at the Augusta church usually stayed. The story of what had transpired was revealed to Bourne by Jehab L. Graham, son of the Reverend William Graham, president of Liberty Hall. Jehab was a licentiate of the Lexington Presbytery. He died at an early age at the home of his father-in-law, a Mr. Heiskill in Staunton, September 12, 1813. Bourne wrote the story more clearly, but *without names*, on pages 114 and 115 of his *Picture of Slavery* as follows:

The following narrative was received from a Preacher, who, I believe, held not a slave; and whose mind was probably like that of many others who had been born in Virginia, almost dead asleep to anything connected with slavery, except in its grosser and more revolting wickedness. At that time, the Preacher resided with a Magistrate, who was an officer of a Christian church. He called upon me one Saturday evening, in no small perturbation, and informed me that he had witnessed this exhibition of judicial equity and power. A travelling slave-dealer had that afternoon met with a strong able-bodied colored man, and having ascertained his master, made the former such a tempting offer that it was irresistible. But what pretext could be alleged for severing the man from his woman and children? The slave-merchant suggested a complaint to the magistrate against the slave, which would insure a

⁴ *Ibid.*, 180-181.

sentence of 39 stripes; when he would appear and offer to remove the slave out of the state, if the owner would sell him, and the magistrate rescind the punishment. The plan was adopted. Some petty crime was alleged; all the man's protestations of innocence, and incidental statements which proved that he was not guilty, were unavailing; he was ordered to be stripped and receive 39 lashes upon the spot. At this juncture the American citizen-trader appeared, and proffered to purchase the man, provided they would release him from the scourging; and to give security to the Magistrate that, within a certain period, he should be transferred to another state. The magistrate recommended the adoption of this measure; and hoping all the parties would agree, consented to postpone the punishment until the Monday ensuing.

The preacher intimated that he had no doubt the magistrate was privy to the whole iniquity. 'How,' said the servant of the sanctuary, 'can I preach to these people tomorrow?' I replied, 'Very well; go and thunder the doctrine of retribution in their ears, till by the divine blessing you cure or kill them.' The poor creature, tortured between the abandonment of his only earthly associates and the dread of the 39 stripes, which he knew would be most mercilessly inflicted, at last sullenly consented to go to Carolina or Tennessee; and on the Monday morning after, heart-broken, he commenced his journey most probably to a premature grave.

My friends, John M. Nelson of Hillsborough, Ohio, Samuel Linn, and Robert Herron, and others of the same vicinity, could 'make both the ears of everyone who heareth them tingle' with the accounts which they can give of slave-driving by professors of religion in the Shenandoah Valley, Virginia.

Samuel Linn was an elder in Bourne's South River church. He signed, with Bourne, the request for the dissolution of the pastoral relation, September 16, 1815, and was called as a witness in Bourne's trial but was excused. John M. Nelson, the son of Alexander Nelson, was an early pupil of Bourne's and received lasting antislavery impressions from him which led him to move to a free state.

In some respects the most important part of Bourne's revelations had to do with John Baxter, an elder in the Reverend

A. B. Davidson's Mossy Creek Church. He was a brother of the Reverend George Addison Baxter, president of Liberty Hall (Washington College) and pastor of New Monmouth Church which included Lexington. George A. Baxter was the most able and influential member of Lexington Presbytery and from first to last Bourne's most active prosecutor. The third article in the *Liberator* by Bourne, under the pseudonym "An Incendiary Fanatic," May 4, 1833, said:

[John Baxter] was a great enemy to slavery in the abstract; and would most piteously cant about the evils of the colored people being settled among them.

John Baxter, a Presbyterian elder, the brother of that slaveholding doctor in divinity, George L. Baxter, held as a slave the wife of a Baptist colored preacher, familiarly call'd 'Uncle Jack.' In a late period of pregnancy he scourged her so that the lives of herself and her unborn child were considered in jeopardy. Uncle Jack was advised to obtain the liberation of his wife. Baxter finally agreed, I think, to sell the woman and her children, three of them, I believe for six hundred dollars, and an additional hundred if the unborn child survived a certain period after its birth. Uncle Jack was to pay one hundred dollars per annum for his wife and children for seven years, and Baxter held a sort of mortgage upon them for the payment. Uncle Jack showed me his back in furrows like a ploughed field. His master used to whip up the flesh, then beat it downwards, and then apply the 'negro-plaster,' salt, pepper, mustard, and vinegar, until all Jack's back was almost as hard and unimpressible as the bones. There is a slaveholding religion! A Presbyterian elder receiving from a Baptist preacher seven hundred dollars for his wife and children. James Kyle and Uncle Jack used to tell that story with great Christian sensibility, and Uncle Jack would weep tears of anguish over his wife's piteous tale, and tears of ecstasy at the same moment that he was free, and that soon, by the grace of God, his wife and children, as he said, 'would all be free together.'

When Bourne left Philadelphia after the 1815 General Assembly where he had made his explosive attack on ministers, elders, and members of the Presbyterian Church who were slaveholders, he was compelled to take a stagecoach which ended

its run at Winchester, Virginia. There he asked a friend to assist him in finding a horse on which to finish his journey to Harrisonburg. This proved difficult. It was Sunday before a wily horse trader turned over to him an animal which he assured Bourne, who knew nothing about horses, would be entirely satisfactory. Not having sufficient ready money, Bourne promised to send the purchase money after he reached home. In the outcome the beast proved to be practically worthless. He sent it back and flatly refused to pay for it.

As reports of Bourne's astonishing performance at the General Assembly reached Harrisonburg, they caused deep resentment. He printed a paper with some explanatory matter without avail. Before long, churches where he had previously officiated refused to hear him. Mossy Creek, where John Baxter was an elder, tried to shut him out. At Stagel's they locked the door against him, and at Augusta he was threatened with tar and feathers. He let it be known that he would admit no slaveholder to a Communion at which he served, as was his custom at South River.

He was distressed by the conduct of A. B. Davidson, a member of Presbytery. Davidson, his former friend and partner, refused to complete his part of an agreement with one of his slaves to give him freedom when the slave had earned as much as his purchase price. The discouraged slave had cut off his thumb and forefinger, leaving himself almost useless as a laborer. Bourne felt that the conduct of these presbyters had made Presbyterian ministers a laughing stock in that community. But that which gave him deepest distress was Davidson's gradual change in attitude toward slavery and toward him personally. Davidson had appeared to be in substantial agreement with Bourne, but his opposition to slavery had moderated as a result of the public reaction against Bourne. In an exchange of letters, Bourne sought to win back his support.

Bourne had been informed that Presbytery would certainly put him on trial for his conduct as their representative at the General Assembly. He was not surprised, therefore, when he was notified officially of that action. On September 29, 1815, at a meeting at New Providence, his elders in the South River Church presented a request to Presbytery for a dissolution of

Bourne's pastorate in their church because they were no longer able "to comply with the stipulations of their call," that is pay his salary, and for other reasons. Bourne joined the elders in this request which was granted.

Bourne had been relieved of his pastorate at South River Church. He then was presented with formal charges:

Common fame charges the Rev. George Bourne, our Commissioner to the Last General Assembly with having brought very heavy charges in the Assembly against some ministers of the Gospel in Virginia, whom he refused to name, respecting their treatment of slaves, the tendency of which was to bring reproach upon the character of the Virginia Clergy in general . . . and with having made several unwarrantable and unchristian charges against many of the members of the Presbyterian Church in relation to slavery.⁵

A list of witnesses for the Presbytery together with a blank citation to be filled with the names of his desired witnesses were ordered to be given by the Clerk to Bourne. He was to appear for trial at the next meeting of Presbytery. The most important item in the list of witnesses and evidence for the prosecution were letters of Bourne to Davidson which had been turned over to Presbytery.

Bourne came to trial at Bethel, December 27, 1815. The record of that important event as preserved in the Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery is as follows:

The Revd. George Bourne having cited all the members of this Pby. to attend as witnesses in his defense against the charges preferred against him by this Presbytery, the question was moved whether such citation deprived a member of the right to sit as a judge in the case and decided in the negative. Mr. Bourne then offered an appeal to the Gen. Assmby against the whole proceedings of the Pby. in his case. Upon which the question was put whether the appeal could be allowed at the present stage of the business and decided in the negative.

The first charge against Mr. Bourne was read and the Rev. J. D.

⁵ Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, New Providence, September 29-30, 1815, Union Theological Seminary Library, Richmond.

Paxton being called and charged by the Moderator testified that, at the last General Assembly, Mr. Bourne brought in a paper stating that the Committee of Overtures had refused to receive it and he therefore claimed his right to present it to the Assembly. Mr. Bourne made some observations upon Slavery wounding to the Members from Virginia, among other things not particularly recollected. He said he had seen a Professor of Religion, perhaps he said, a Preacher, driving Slaves, Mr. Paxton thinks he added, chained or tied together, through a certain town in Virginia. In answer to some observations by the Rev. Wm. Hill, Mr. Bourne said it was impossible to conceive or describe the state of Slavery as practised in Virginia, or in the Southern States and even by Professors of Religion. Mr. Bourne being called upon to name the party driving the Slaves in order to prevent unfavourable impressions against the Virginia ministers in general refused to comply with the call. Mr. Paxton considered the anecdote as making injurious impressions in the Assembly against the Presbyterian Clergy in Virginia. The above testimony being read to Mr. Paxton, he affirmed it to be correctly stated.

Mr. Robert Herron being charged testified that Mr. Bourne told him he had laid before the last General Assembly an Overture enquiring what ought to be done with a Minister of the Gospel who tied up his slave (the Witness thinks, a female), whipped her, left her tied, went to Church and preached, then came back and whipped her again. Witness thinks Mr. Bourne added words to this amount, he ordered a bystander to kill the husband of the woman whipped for his interference and he, the Minister, would bear him harmless. Mr. Bourne told Witness as well as the Witness's recollection serves, that he had stated to the Assembly, his having seen a Minister of the Gospel driving two slaves before him and taking two on the horse with him through the town in which he lived. Mr. Bourne said he had been called on in the Assembly to name the Minister last mentioned which he had refused to do in consequence of which refusal there was a great bustle in the house. The above testimony being read to Mr. Herron, he affirmed it to be correctly stated.

The Rev. John McCue being called as a Witness by Mr. Bourne and charged by the Moderator testified as follows: Mr. Bourne put the following question to the witness: Did you about three

years ago ride to Madison County and purchase two Negro men, one woman and two children, and with the latter, one before and the other behind you, stop at my house in Port Republic, alight with the two children and did I not walk with you thence to Wm. Craig's in company with these Negroes? Answer: I did all this. The above testimony being read to Mr. McCue he affirmed it to be correctly stated.

On the second charge, Mr. Robert Herron being solemnly charged by the Moderator testified that he thinks he has heard Mr. Bourne say he believed it to be impossible that any one could be a Christian and a slaveholder; that slaveholders were all a set of Negro thieves. Witness says that on his suggesting to Mr. Bourne that the Presbytery would call him to an account about his doings relative to slavery Mr. Bourne answered, let them quit stealing.

Question by Mr. Bourne: Did you tell me that members of Pby. were determined to excommunicate me or turn me out of Presby.?

Ans. I told you that it was my opinion that the Presby. would call you to account. The above testimony being read to Mr. Herron, he affirmed it to be correctly stated. Three letters were then read from Mr. Bourne to Mr. A. B. Davidson, [Spring Farm, Near Lexington, Rockbridge] dated July 28, 1815, August 10, 1815 and Aug. 25, 1815.

Harrisonburg, July 28, 1815

Dear Sir,

. . . Only one way exists to comply either with the Confession of Faith, eighth commandment, Note page 277, or with the decision of the Assembly—and that is by *ejecting instantanter* every slave-holder from the Church—for the Devil can make better pretensions to be a Christian than a slaveholder—the one is the Father of all evil, but he is no Hypocrite—but a Christian slave-holder!! is an ever-lasting Liar and Thief and Deceiver. How can a Man be a Christian who steals souls? How can a man be a follower of the Apostles who is always robbing his dependent? How dare a man preach the Gospel while he is a Negro-thief? No blasphemy is greater than for a Slave-holder to attempt to preach from the Book delivered to Jesus in Nazareth. Luke 4. 18. Between Mr. Wilson and Roland with the black girl, and your traffic with Joe.—Presbyterians and Presbyterian Preachers are just a *by-word* among the people and are the subject of daily reproach and personal insult. Thus the

highest degree of theft is established by law, sanctioned by the church, and practised by the Promulgers of the Book, which declares every slave-holder shall have for his portion, the 'worm that dieth not and the fire that is unquenchable.'

If I wrote any thing but scriptural truth, I would apologise for its severity; but the Gospel requires no defence. Ergo. If I were to go to Union, could circumstance admit, I should *peremptorily prohibit every slaveholder from the Lord's Table*, as I have no wish to involve myself in any difficulty upon that head, *I shall attend no more sacraments*, but in my own congregation—where a Negro-thief is not numbered.

My printing-office is for sale, and all my books will likewise be transferred at first cost to any purchaser; for I am determined to remove as speedily as convenient from among Hypocrites who pretend to be Christians and then lock up the Meeting-house against the Gospel, and close by the House of Prayer, threaten to 'tar and feather' him who has the honesty to say that a Man-Stealer is a Thief. Wartmann [Bourne's printer] will willingly remove with the Printing office any where, and I will sell it upon easy terms of payment, as it is impossible for any man to live in Virginia who will not either become a 'Thief or consent with those who are Thieves.' Psalm 50. 16-21. The idea that a Man could be a *Christian, or a Democrat and a Slaveholder* was quite a jest among the Northern and Eastern and Western Brethren in the Assembly. *It is absolutely impossible.*

I have stated my sentiments thus frankly to you, not as personal reflections, but to shew the ground upon which I purpose to act; and I shall not move from it until I am convinced that an eternal Kidnapper and Robber is a merciful and honest man and a devout Christian. I have a volume nearly ready for the press, which I expect will satisfy every man who wishes to know the truth of the impracticability of reconciling Slavery and the Gospel; but which I suppose I scarcely dare to publish. If you would rescind your contract with Fawcett, and give Joe [who had cut off his thumb and forefinger in despair] his freedom, with his wife, you would promote the cause of Christ more than by a twelve-months preaching without it, or in fact preaching for life.

We have nothing new. Our town is in war; the 'Devil's Dogs against the Gospel.'

Lay the question of Slavery to heart—read Scott's Commentary on Exod. 21.16, Deut. 24.7 and the places referred to in the margin. Ask how a man who says he believes the Confession of Faith and holds slaves can be consistent? and boldly join the Standard of Liberty, to proclaim deliverance to the captive, spiritually and naturally. A man who says that he is a *Christian and a Republican*, and has any connection with slavery only exposes himself to ridicule for he is so simple that he can not discern right from wrong, or so deceitful that he professes honesty while he is a THIEF. May God deliver the church from this Legion of Devils. Amen!—My respect for you makes me write thus plain, and what is said with brotherly Christian affection will be received in the same spirit. As you are acquainted with my determination, you will not feel astonished, to hear of my departure in this fall if possible.

Harrisonburg, August 10, 1815.

I give you the most undeniable proof, that I am not ungrateful for your interference on my behalf, and that my professions of affection are sincere, by an immediate reply to your question. You ask me, 'when and where did you obtain this wonderful light?'

I am *not* 'in a ferment,' 'but speak forth the words of truth and soberness.' That I did wrong in *hiring* a slave I *contritely* admit. I have repented; I have *made restitution*; and now I endeavour to counteract the influence of my former example. 'Go and do likewise.'

You and others know, that upon the subject of slavery, I have always been of the same opinion.

The *Luminary* and his Satellites are incompetent to enlighten *me*.

The Mossy-Creek Elders attempted to close the House of Prayer; at Stagel's the doors were actually locked by *Negroe-Stealing Tories*; and the assault was threatened in Augusta.

The *People* who were my *Friends* here, before I lived in the town, are still my *Friends*; and I have not changed my opinions of them within the last three years. My opponents are influenced by the '*railing evil spirit*.' If it be, 'rash imprudence,' for a Presbyterian Minister to 'declare the whole counsel of God,' then I am *rash*, I am *imprudent*.

If 'it is much better that slaves should be in the families of Christians than in unbelievers,' how could you, upon your own

principles, sell Joe to Mr. Fawcett? What self-confutation! what self-censure! what self-crimination? I stated that I should not be present at the meeting of Presbytery because I expect to be on a journey. I intimated, that for the sake of evading unnecessary disputation, I would attend no Sacraments, because I could not avoid solemnly admonishing the Communicants; but never did an idea enter my mind of withdrawing from the Church. As I anticipate to remove, I shall be disconnected from the Lexington Pby.

My opinion of Calvinism, Arminianism, Presbyterianism, Methodism, Theological Doctrine, Church Government and Discipline, as they have not changed for the last 18 years, may be fairly presumed, *unalterable*; and therefore I claim the *confidence* due to *stability*.

How could I presume that *you* would be disturbed at any thing which could be offered against slavery, when I thought that your sentiments and mine were in unison, I wrote you in the fullness of my heart; under a deep conviction, that all opposition to the Gospel, all obstructions to the cause of Christ, and all crimes compounded, are of inferior magnitude to the single sin of *enslaving our brothers*. As you have *very easy access* to '*this wonderful light*,' I will point you to the *focus of it's rays*. The Presbyterian Confession of Faith, Page 277.

Exodus 21.16 & 20.13-17 and 22.21, 22. Leviticus 19.13. Deuteronomy 24.7. and 23.15, 16. and 24.14, 15. Psalm 50.17-19. Proverbs 22.22, 23. Isaiah 58.6-10 and 8.20. and 5.20, 23 and 1.4 and 10.1, 2. and 5.8 and 59.3-8, 13-15 and 56.10, 11 and 29.13. and 1.11 to 20, 23.28. Jerem. 22.13, 17. and 8.26, 27, 30, 31. and 34.8-20 and 7.4-6, 8-11. Ezek. 27.13. and 22.7, 12, 13. and 33.1-20. Joel 3.3, 6-8. Amos 1.6, 9, 11. and 2.6, 7, 12. and 4.1-5, 12 and 8.4-6. Obadiah 14, 15. Zechar. 7.9, 10. and 8.16, 17. Malachi 3.5. Matt. 7.12, 16-20. Luke 4.18. and 6.38 and 10.25-37. and 11. 46-52. Acts 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 Chapters and 17.24-26. and 20.20, 24, 26, 27. Rom. 2.1-3, 17-29. Ephes. 6.9. Colossians 4.1. I Tim. 1.10.2 Tim. 3.2, 8. I John 4.21. I Corinth. 7.20-24. Rev. 18.13.

If you will peruse these passages of the sacred volume, with Scott's Notes and Observations, under the recollection that you have adopted the Confession of Faith; I cannot but hope that you will perceive the necessity of manifesting a consistency between your avowed principles and your uniform conduct. With respect to the '*ungenerous, unchristian, opprobrious, harsh names and epithets*';—in a letter dated March 10, 1815, subscribed *in your*

name, and by *your own hand*; I am told that all *Slaveholders* are *Negro-stealers*, the *Devil's Dogs*, and the *Devil's children*. January 23, 1815, you state, 'I know many, rather than part with their slaves, will give up Heaven itself. Let us seize the *Monster* by the throat, and drag it out of the land of liberty.' If *these sentences* and *your pamphlet*, do not comprise all my doctrine then language is incomprehensible.

After you have studied the above citations with an unprejudiced temper, praying in faith, that God may 'send abroad the light and the truth,' I shall be happy to receive a reply to the following queries.

Moses says that *slaveholders* are *Thieves*; Exodus 21. 16 Deut. 24. 7. Paul declares them *Manstealers*, 1 Tim. 4. 10. Dare a Preacher of the Gospel change the truth of God into a lie, by denominating them Righteous men and Christians? Mr. Davidson says, that Slaveholders are the Devil's Dogs and children; ought I to *contradict* you, when your doctrine is established by 'Thus saith the Lord?' The Confession of Faith declares that a Slaveholder is 'a sinner of the first rank and the highest thief.' Can you admit, that he who traffics in slaves, believes the Confession? Will you confide in his sincerity, who pretends to be a Christian while Moses and Paul and the Confession of Faith denounce him as the greatest criminal, and while Mr. Davidson himself declares that he is not only 'in the road to hell,' but absolutely a child, a dog of the Devil? I pronounced that a *Slave-dealer* was a Thief; so says the Scriptures; must I falsify the word of God? I affirmed that a Slaveholder's pretensions to Christianity were no better than Satan's. Revelation and Mr. Davidson assert that he is the Devil's offspring; the servant can not make a better claim than the Master; must I *contradict two witnesses*? I averred, that a man must be either deluded or a deceiver who professes to believe what he does not practice; who assents to the Confession of Faith, while his whole life disavows it; who solemnly engages, that he will promulge it's doctrines in spite of all opposition and persecution, and yet remains silent upon the greatest crime, or himself perpetrates it. If he be ignorant, he may be cured by '*this wonderful light*' if he be insincere, he is guilty. Dare I deny the truth?

The quotations from your letters fully justify my 'harsh names.' You say—a Slaveholder is a '*Negro-stealer*,' of course he is a THIEF. You Pronounce him the '*Devil's Dog*,' then I am certain if he pre-

tends to be a Christian, he is a *Hypocrite*, and if he professes to be a *Presbyterian*, while he denies the Confession of Faith he is a *Liar*.

Can you derive any *comfort* from the conviction that your *principles* and *practice* are at absolute *variance*? Had Lot partaken of Sodom's transgression, upon the plea, that it was a national and not an individual sin, established 'by the laws of his country,' he would have been consumed in the conflagration. By Ezek. 14 while the land is destroyed, Noah, Daniel and Job alone are saved, not for joining in the general wickedness, but for their abstinence from the evil. Your interpretation of national and individual sins may console your mind, for *manstealing*, but from the *peace* which flows from the consideration, that when the nation is ruined, I and my family will be engulfed in the universal desolation, may the Lord ever deliver you and yours, me and mine! Your *sneers* have made *no impression* upon me, and my paper on the subject admits no reply to remarks concerning individuals. I fight not *men* but the 'MONSTER.'

I rejoice in your Confession, '*you have affected me deeply.*' Would to God it may be firm-rooted, and bring forth 'the fruits of righteousness!'

It now remains with you, to *correspond* or *not*; if the former I shall be gratified; if the latter, I shall regret it; but I shall not sacrifice the *Truth of God*, for the *friendship of man*. May the good will of him who dwelt in the bush ever be your portion!

Harrisonburg, Aug. 25, 1815

Your last letter renders any further discussion of slavery in the abstract superfluous; because the sacred volume has ceased to perform its office. There is possibly an excusable, certainly a criminal ignorance; that of many slaveholders may exculpate them at the bar of God; but the plea is invalid in church officers; and wo! be to those to whom the sins of the people, through want of instruction shall be imputed.

When Mr. Fawcett offered to manumit Jo's wife, or had he not done it, you ought to have emancipated him; he had earned more than you originally *paid* for him; upon no plea or pretence, therefore can the money which you obtain as the price of his future bondage, be an honest acquisition. 'To call our fellow men our property' says Presbyterian Rice of Kentucky, 'is a gross absurdity,

a contradiction to common sense, and an indignity to human nature. The owners of such slaves are the *licensed robbers*, and not just proprietors of what they claim.' ¹⁶ He believes the Confession of Faith!

Your denial of the application to slavery of my scripture citations, and your plea that Abraham, the Patriarchs, Paul and Philemon sanction man-stealing; how 'men wrest the scriptures to their own destruction!' evince that all other means of conviction must be nugatory.

I neither distorted your meaning, nor misrepresented your language. Your letters have been shewn to several persons, and they unanimously coincide in my opinion, that the passages quoted can bear no construction, but that you denounced all Slaveholders as *Negro-stealers*, the *Devil's Dogs and Children*. And your doctrine is undeniable.

You say 'slaves are property in this country.' I maintain that they are *not* property, that they *never could be* property: and every man who claims a coloured child as soon as it is born, nurtures and detains it in slavery, or sells it for endless servitude is as very a *kidnapper* as if he went to Africa and stole it; and therefore that all the slaves in the United States are as indubitably kidnapped as were their ancestors. Ergo, every Slaveholder is, as your Confession of Faith declares, a *man-stealer*, guilty 'of the highest kind of theft.' Of this doctrine, I *dare* every Sophist, to attempt a confutation.

The only plan to destroy the *Monster*: Let every man 'quit stealing,' let every Preacher by his instructions and example enlighten the minds and rouse the consciences of his auditors; let every Church officer unite and declare that his doctrine shall be enforced in the discipline: let every Member who holds slaves be faithfully admonished that his practice involves the highest guilt, and that he must immediately desist or the church will not recognize his profession.

I do not comprehend by what process, the application of Scriptural language to any sinner can be constructed into 'railing and reviling;' upon this principle; he who reprehends the most flagrant

¹⁶ David Rice, *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy* (Lexington, Ky., 1792). The quotation is not exact but in no sense has its meaning been changed.

iniquity, deserves "the most pointed and severe reproofs of the Apostle."

Mr. McCue declares '*that upon the principle of equity, no man can be a Slaveholder.*' This is a *self-evident truth*: Ergo: *honesty is not an ingredient in a Slaveholder's religion.* Alas!

'Offence given to Slaveholders': are we not aware that no headstrong transgressors will be reprehended, especially if it affects their interest, without barking as Devil's dogs? If we must not reprove sinners, from the fear of exasperating and hardening them; it is folly to preach the Gospel, or to become responsible for the Souls of our Auditors. I am perfectly convinced, that *Negro-dealers*, will ere long hear no censures of their abominations; they will cry *tomorrow*, until they join Pharaoh and the Egyptian Slaveholders in the Red Sea.

I stand upon the word of God, and *your* confession of Faith; and no man, by those corner stones of the church, can refute the following positions: Slavery is an impious usurpation of the government of God; a false claim to the services of man; a cruel infringement of his rights; and an audacious robbery of his all.

Every Slaveholder, when he buys a slave, purchases a rational being, whom he knew was stolen; 'the Receiver is as bad as the Thief.'

Every man who holds slaves in the United States is a partaker of his sin who originally kidnapped them; and if he enslaves the child at his birth is equally criminal: so says the Word of God, so affirms the Confession of Faith. If we say otherwise, we 'deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.'

Slaves are considered as cattle, but treated with inferior benevolence; denied evangelical instruction; bereft of necessary food and raiment, and doomed to hopeless wretchedness without end. From such Christianity may the Lord deliver us!

Covetousness which is idolatry, originated and perpetuates slavery: did it not combine the ease, the luxury and the wealth of its participants, no man would enslave his neighbour.

Do unto others as they should do unto thee. How? Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself. Who is my neighbour? The Samaritan. A Slaveholder does to his kidnapped African, as he desires *not* an Algerine to do unto him. Ergo, he loves not his neighbor; but 'he who loves not his brother whom he hath seen, loves not

God whom he hath not seen; and if a man say, I love God and hateth his brother, he is a liar.' I John 4. 20 but a slaveholder's love to his slave as Altarpher saith, is all *trumpery*.'

You charge me with reviling Preachers. This I deny. I rail at no person; but if it be reviling to affirm, that Preachers traffic Slaves, like horses; and that *your* Confession of Faith, says, that all such men are guilty 'of the highest kind of theft,' I must be a reviler as long as they continue in the iniquitous practice.

A *slaveholder* preaching 'deliverance to the captive!!!' A Christian expecting the pardon of his 10,000 talents from God, while he not only *covets*, but actually *steals* neighbour, his wife, his children, his ox, his ass, and everything that is his! A republican who swears, that 'all men are born free, with natural, inherent, and inalienable rights of which by no compact can they deprive themselves, or their posterity,' and immuring in endless bondage one half of the people on his plantation!

Your letter manifests, especially by your omission of any notice of the Confession of Faith, that your *mind is convinced*, but to act conformably with *your* creed, would COST too much. If every eminent and enlightened Divine 'who ever lived thinks it consistent to hold slaves,' that will not change the truth. Dr. S. S. Smith says, that 'all the pretences to justify slavery are false and impudent hypocrisy, and slavery is the most atrocious inroad upon justice and humanity ever practiced.'

Your *conscientiousness* respecting the *separation of Jo from the female cattle*, when you were pocketing \$400 of his labor for nothing, reminds me of the people whom Jesus addressed Matt. 23. 13, 36, 'who paid tithe of mint, anise and cumin, and omitted the weightier matters of the law, judgment, mercy, and faith, who strained at a gnat and swallowed a camel!'

Before we move one step further, or discuss any other point, you must prove that a Slaveholder can be a Presbyterian; because I boldly affirm that *no Slaveholder is or can consistently profess himself to be a Presbyterian if the Confession of Faith is the Standard of the Church*. When you have knawed this bone, I will give you another. I wait your reply. May God bless you and yours!

George Bourne

Mr. Bourne in his defence against the second Charge, referred generally to the Bible and the Confession of Faith; and to the contents of his letters to Mr. Davidson already read and recorded. A letter was read from Mr. Bourne to the Stated Clerk of Presby. dated Decem. 4, 1815, which after a list of witnesses cited by Mr. Bourne contains the following passage: 'These are a part of the witnesses. As soon as I have obtained the names of some Negroes and their P. E. D. L. A. R. S. and T. A. N. N. E. R. S. they shall be forwarded for record.'

Also a printed paper was read containing besides Mr. Bourne's Citation of witnesses, the following passages: 'AS the dwelling place of common fame, who is generally a most arrant LIAR, is unknown; the Witness is desired, if he can ascertain this notorious knave's residence, to cite him also to attend.' 'Wanted an impudent Tertullus who will obstinately maintain that Soul-trafficking, Slavery and Negro thieving are sanctioned by Christianity, Justice, Mercy and Republicanism.' Together with the following passages said to be an extract from the Confession of Faith: 'Stealers of men, the most corrupt transgressors, Sinners of the first Rank, are all those who are concerned in bringing any of the human Race into Slavery or in detaining them in it; or who bring off slaves or freemen, and keep, sell or buy them; to steal or retain men in Slavery is the highest kind of theft.'

A question was moved whether the Note under the 142d. question of the larger Catechism be a part of the Confession of Faith? Which question was decided in the negative. Questions were then taken severally on the two charges against Mr. Bourne; and it was decided that they were supported by the testimony. On the two papers last above mentioned Presbytery decided that they contain strong marks of contempt towards this Body. The question was then proposed, can Mr. Bourne consistently with the conduct exhibited by the Evidence, be any longer retained as a Member of this Pby? Which question was decided in the negative. Wherefore, resolved that Mr. George Bourne be and he hereby is deposed from the Office of the Gospel Ministry. From this decision Mr. Bourne appealed to the next General Assembly. Presby. adjourned to meet at the same place the next morning at 8 o'clock. Concluded with prayer.⁷

⁷ Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, Bethel, December 27, 1815.

CHAPTER IV

BOURNE'S DEPOSITION

THE Presbyterian Church in the United States of America inherited from the Scotch Church an extensive collection of laws for the government of the church and, in particular, for the conduct of trials therein. These laws took proper account of certain characteristics usually present in any society where the Scotch-Irish in any numbers are found. They reflect a preference for orderly procedure where possible, an appreciation of fine legal distinctions, and at least temporary satisfaction for and delight in a good hot theological or ecclesiastical fight. These laws, where they apply to trials, were designed to secure as large a measure of fairness as could be expected under the circumstances.

The first direction to which attention is called reads as follows: "The trial shall be open, fair and impartial."¹ In Bourne's case, the Moderator elected was George A. Baxter. The Clerk elected was Conrad Speece. It is admitted that there were only three ministers present besides Bourne, who was on trial. The third was John McCue, and so there was not much of a choice. Moreover, George A. Baxter and Conrad Speece were the two men who were the principal prosecutors of Bourne until his General Assembly deposition in 1818. George A. Baxter's brother, as has been noted, was the culprit in one of Bourne's narratives. Conrad Speece as Clerk wrote all of the minutes of the trial. Both of them were also among his five judges. How could a trial officered by them be fair and impartial?

When one turns to the rule on a quorum for such a meeting of Presbytery, one finds that three ministers at least and as

¹*The Constitution of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1806), 429.

many elders as may be present constitute a sufficient number. Three ministers besides Bourne were enrolled: Baxter, Speece, and McCue, but nine other ministers were listed as absent. Usually at a minister's trial there is a large attendance. Only a quarter of the ministers attended this trial. It would perhaps be a fair guess that the reason for this small attendance was the reluctance of that proportion of the members to have anything to do with Bourne's prosecution. Of course many of them knew what was pending.

Turning to the charges, one finds them very loosely drawn. Had Bourne named any of the subjects of his stories, it would have been easy to have found prosecutors and thus avoid the weak "Common Fame" charges. But in order to deny the truth of a story some admission of identification with the culprit would have been required and that was not to be thought of by the prosecution, composed as it was of the guilty parties. The charges, however, were required to cover all the offenses; none was to be added after the list including the names of witnesses was handed to the accused at a meeting held at least ten days before the trial. In this case an astonishing ruling admitted the three letters written by Bourne to A. B. Davidson but refused Bourne permission to submit in evidence Davidson's letters to him which had elicited the admitted letters. This may have been a correct ruling from a technical point of view because Bourne's letters had been cited as evidence, but it destroys all pretense of an honest effort to ascertain facts or arrive at a just conclusion. Davidson's letters, if still in existence, may add something to the record of why he turned against Bourne. Nevertheless, no documents could have given a better statement of Bourne's antislavery convictions than did his letters to Davidson. Baxter and Speece may have secured some small assistance from these letters at the trial, but across the years and even today one can only rejoice that they were preserved for the reader's instruction and use.

As the trial proceeded, Bourne's foes flouted the rules of procedure by admitting as evidence two other Bourne letters. He had written, perhaps foolishly, two letters to Clerk Conrad Speece *after* the two charges had been presented to him. The letters had to do with the citation of witnesses and would not

have been objectionable if Bourne had confined himself to that business. In both letters, however, he wrote what the Presbytery justly considered "strong marks of contempt" for it. The Presbytery proceeded without argument to introduce these two letters as evidence against Bourne. It then allowed these letters to be read, which of course made a very unfavorable impression from Bourne's point of view. The court then took the vote on whether the evidence submitted had supported the charges. Having voted that it did, they voted on whether Bourne could "consistently with the conduct exhibited by the Evidence be any longer retained as a member of this Pby?" The negative answer was a foregone conclusion. On the following question of deposition, however, the vote was a tie, and he was deposed only by the moderator's tie-breaking vote, which meant that at least two of the judges, certainly laymen, cast their votes against his deposition. Bourne gave notice of an appeal to the next General Assembly. He immediately left Harrisonburg with his family for Germantown, Pennsylvania, and to the day of his death never again set foot in Virginia.

Bourne had been deprived of his ministerial rights and duties within the Presbyterian church. In substance, his license to preach in any Presbyterian church was revoked, but the final authority on the question of his being deposed was the General Assembly to which Bourne appealed. A church in the final analysis is its congregation, and the church at Germantown had invited Bourne in November, at least a month before his trial, to fill its pulpit for one year. Bourne acted upon his own responsibility while his appeal was pending, and the agreement with the Germantown Church was consummated. With full knowledge on their part of the results of the trial, Bourne began regular services there in January, 1816. His sponsor at Germantown was Samuel Blair, brother of Mary Blair, the wife of David Rice of Kentucky who died June 18, 1816. The entire family were opposed to slavery, and Blair remained loyal to Bourne until after final disposition of his case by the General Assembly of 1818.

The Presbytery of Philadelphia to which the Germantown church belonged made an issue of Bourne's right to preach while deposed even though his appeal was pending. Before the

trouble was settled, both Blair and the church withdrew from the Philadelphia Presbytery, but after a season both of them returned. The matter of preaching while an appeal was pending was taken up in General Assembly of 1816, laid on the table, and not again considered.

As Bourne was about to return to Germantown after his trial before the Lexington Presbytery, Blair made this pertinent comment:

At a meeting of the Presbytery of Lexington, he was subjected to a prosecution on account of his frequent and animated remonstrances against the iniquitous practice prevalent among all orders of people in that and other Southern States of slave-trafficking, slave-holding, and unjustifiable severity in the discipline of slaves. As a Judicatory on this question *that* Presbytery was evidently incompetent. The Judges being deeply interested as slave-holders and dependent on slave-holders in their respective congregations for their living.²

The congregation of the Germantown church was unanimous in wanting Bourne to come. He had always been an interesting preacher, and the church advanced under his ministry. When Bourne came, the little church had only 29 members, but 40 members were added during Bourne's ministry, and he performed 36 baptisms. Despite the increase in church membership, his salary remained small, and he had a difficult time supporting his family. He was always burdened with debt. The books which Woodward of Philadelphia had supplied, valued at \$1,000, had been lost when he moved to Germantown. Problems of church finance also disturbed him because all of the business of raising money to maintain the church was his responsibility.³ The chief accomplishment of his Germantown residence was the completion and publication of *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* in 1816.

² Minutes of the Session of the First Presbyterian Church in Germantown, Presbyterian Historical Society, Philadelphia.

³ A pitiful record of his hampered efforts to meet all of these demands is to be found in his letters to William Woodward. Gratz Collection, Manuscript Division, Historical Society of Pennsylvania, Philadelphia.

Meanwhile the Lexington Presbytery proceeded as if its disposition of Bourne's case would be final. The case never reached the General Assembly of 1816 because, although Bourne was present, the minutes of the Presbytery were not sent to it. The minutes of the lower court must always be in the hands of the higher court before it can take action on an appeal. Officially a case is not otherwise before the higher court.⁴ Bourne had made a copy of the minutes and of his appeal and had mailed them to the Clerk, Speece, requesting that he make an official copy available to the Clerk of the General Assembly. Speece, knowing that he and Baxter could manage the Synod of Virginia much more easily than the General Assembly, sent word to Bourne that he would not remove from the Post Office the papers Bourne had sent. Speece planned to send the papers to the Synod, not to the General Assembly to which Bourne had appealed. This was not made known until the General Assembly met. It ruled that a copy of the proceedings, made by Bourne, was not sufficient.⁵ It is true that the 1816 General Assembly talked about the Bourne case, but everything said was unofficial. The Synod of Virginia likewise never had the minutes of the Lexington Presbytery in Bourne's case. The General Assembly of 1816 ordered the Lexington Presbytery "to forward to the next General Assembly the minutes relative to the case of Mr. Bourne, provided he does not carry his appeal to the meeting of the Synod of Virginia."⁶

The case was not taken to the Synod of Virginia. It was taken to the General Assembly of 1817 which heard the minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, discussed the case fully, and then adopted the following resolution:

⁴ "General Principles of Discipline, XVI," *A Digest of the Acts of the Supreme Judicatory of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America* (Philadelphia, 1850?), 80.

⁵ *Minutes of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in the United States of America from its organization A. D. 1789 to A. D. 1820 inclusive* (Philadelphia, 1847), 627.

⁶ Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, Lexington, September 27, 1816, Union Theological Seminary Library, Richmond; *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 626-627.

The Assembly judge that the charges, in the case of Mr. Bourne, were not fully substantiated, and that, if they had been, the sentence was too severe. Therefore, *Resolved*, That The sentence of the Presbytery of Lexington, deposing Mr. Bourne, be reversed, and it hereby is reversed; and that the Presbytery commence the trial anew.⁷

What a travesty on justice it was to say (1) that a man had not been proved guilty of charges brought against him, (2) that the sentence was greater than fully substantiated charges would have justified, (3) that his conviction was therefore reversed, and (4) that he should be tried again without change of venue. Men could not have done this without reason. Bourne's explanation, as shall be seen, probably was correct, that the objective was a restoration of harmony.

The Lexington Presbytery obeyed the order of the General Assembly on August 28, 1817. It reinstated the charges and evidence of its earlier action in the case, and then cleared the way for a renewal of proceedings by rejecting as unacceptable a letter of apology from Bourne.⁸ The letter was as follows:

TO THE MODERATOR OF LEXINGTON PRESBYTERY

As the sentence of the Pby. which met at Bethel on Decm. 27th 1815, has been reversed by the Gen. Assembly; I now address myself to you with all due respect and candour.

The Presbytery will accept of my Apology for everything which they construe to be justly offensive to them. An irritable temper, however palliated, is wrong, undecorous expressions—especially when liable to misconstruction cannot be vindicated—and actions incompatible with the charitable sensibilities which the Gospel enjoins are unjustifiable. For everything wherefore of this nature—I hope Presbytery will receive this acknowledgment, both as the proof of my regret and as ample reparation, that the whole subject may forever be obliterated.

If the Presby. shall thus judge, they are desired through Mr. Davidson to forward me their Dismission to any other Body which

⁷ *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 646.

⁸ *Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery*, Bethel Church, September 1, 1817.

chuses to receive me into their connection, among the Presbyteries around us.

Praying that the Lord may render you abundantly useful as labourers in his Vineyard, I am respectfully and truly yours,

German Town, May 28th 1817.

George Bourne ⁹

This was no ordinary letter, either in its inception or its content. Not by a single syllable did Bourne modify his claim that slaveholding was manstealing, proscribed by the Constitution of the Presbyterian Church. The members of Presbytery would never have accepted less. Furthermore, he had no intention of naming the persons to whom he had alluded in the General Assembly of 1815. Bourne may not have expected the Presbytery to accept the letter as satisfactory, but he labored over it in the hope that it would influence the next General Assembly. He wrote in 1838:

The General Assembly of 1817 had the whole case before them—the charges; the record of the Presbytery; my reasons of appeal; and my whole course of life and preaching at Germantown from January 1816, when I left Virginia. After nearly three days discussion, my appeal was sustained. The charges were virtually pronounced frivolous; the evidence insufficient, and their censure too severe, even if the accusations had been proved; but the Lexington Presbytery were permitted to institute a new trial, as was expressly understood, merely to give me an opportunity to become reconciled to that Presbytery, and terminate the collision.

In conformity with that impression, Mr. McCue, one of their delegates to the General Assembly of 1817, was the bearer of a conciliatory letter, composed, I believe, during his visit at my house, from me to the Lexington Presbytery. He rejoiced, as he expressed it, that that letter would 'end the foolish squabble.' However, when that body met, they refused to accept my concessions; and in opposition to all that Messrs McCue, and Davidson, and Linn, and others probably, could do, they determined to continue their persecution. The truth is this. The instigators of the first trial, as is well known to all persons in Virginia and Philadelphia who

⁹ *Ibid.*

'understand the case,' had resolved, if possible, to destroy me. But as they realized that their object could not be attained by merely renewing the process upon the old charges, which, according to the decision of the General Assembly of 1817, were not substantiated; they resolved to add other accusations; and accordingly they invented four new allegations against me. It will be remembered that during all their proceedings I was absent, as I was not called to jeopard my life in Virginia.¹⁰

The four new charges to which Bourne here refers may be briefly stated. They were (3) that he had published "various and gross slanders" against the Presbytery; (4) that he showed contempt of the authority of the Presbytery by continuing to preach after his deposition and before that sentence was reversed by the General Assembly; (5) that he had authorized the purchase of a horse on Sunday and subsequently had refused to pay for it; (6) that he had "frequently been guilty of the Crime of wilful departure from the truth."¹¹

These new charges, less respectable than the earlier ones, were like them based only on "Common Fame," a term closely akin to common gossip. A possible reason for the failure of one of Bourne's foes to assume the place of accuser or prosecutor which would have greatly strengthened these charges was their knowledge of the salutary church law that if a prosecutor failed to prove his charge "he must himself be censured as a slanderer of the gospel ministry: in proportion to the malignity, or rashness that shall appear in the prosecution."¹² Most of the charges dealt with acts performed more than a year before the charges were formulated, consequently they were of doubtful validity for use under "Common Fame." For one of them no evidence was produced. Even worse was the manufacture of the charges of Sabbath desecration and of failure to meet financial obligations out of the shenanigans of a horse trader. That Bourne was compelled to face such charges at the hands of erstwhile friends and colleagues when his ministerial life depended on the outcome is in itself proof that well-planned

¹⁰ *Southern Religious Telegraph*, August 30, 1838.

¹¹ Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, Bethel, September 1, 1817.

¹² *Constitution of the Presbyterian Church*, 434.

vindictiveness rather than even-handed justice animated their conduct.

Only two ministers were present at all of the meetings. Only three besides Bourne, who was on trial, were present when he was first deposed on December 27, 1815; only ten were present when he was deposed the second time, on April 25, 1818. Twelve were absent the first time and eight the second time. Seven ministers were never present, and only occasionally was an elder present.

Aside from the horse business, there was little new in the second trial. It began at Bethel Church, August 28 to September 1, 1817, where the former charges against Bourne were reinstated and the four new ones formulated. It continued at Staunton, November 20 and 21, 1817, and at Harrisonburg, March 6, 1818, and concluded at Staunton, April 22 to 24, 1818. Bourne, of course, was never present despite repeated efforts to get him back into Virginia. He was tried *in absentia*. There was no one present for a moment to question or deny any statement made by any witness, and there was not a single witness who was favorable to Bourne. The only word on Bourne's behalf from the beginning to the end of this "conspiracy" was the reading of his letter of protest against "all and every minute, act, resolution, discussion and sentence which have been or may be adopted." This letter, written by Bourne on February 21, was received by Presbytery on March 6 and laid on the table without reading. It was taken from the table, read, and inserted in the records on April 22, three days before Presbytery resented him to deposition and after most of the evidence was in.

The question of slavery was studiously avoided in the second trial. Most of the attention was given to Bourne's purchase of a horse on Sunday and subsequent refusal to pay for it and to the fourth charge of willful departure from the truth. Bourne was convicted on all charges except that of contempt by reason of preaching after being deposed by the Presbytery. He was deposed from the Office of the Gospel Ministry for the second time by the Lexington Presbytery, April 25, 1818, and a full record was forwarded to the General Assembly.¹³

¹³ Minutes of the Lexington Presbytery, Staunton, April 22-25, 1818.

Bourne had some interesting things to say in 1838 about the two charges most emphasized in this trial *in absentia*:

They accused me of sabbath-breaking for authorizing the purchase of a horse on the Lord's day, and of fraud in refusing to pay for said horse. In refutation of that charge I shall merely relate one fact. During my residence at Sing-Sing, a minister in Virginia, whom I will not name, sent to a person of that village, a story about that horse; and I believe, the *pretended* testimony as it was recorded by the Lexington Presbytery concerning that far-famed horse was included. A letter of inquiry was instantly despatched to a gentleman whose statements no man in Virginia for one moment would dispute: but his name from prudential motives must be withheld. From his reply to the church of Mount Pleasant in 1822, I extract the following paragraphs.

'As to the tale about Mr. Bourne having purchased a horse on the sabbath-day I do not believe it even obtained the credence of a single individual who was engaged in its propagation. So far was the charge from being substantiated, that the rumor about it died away long before the *malice* in which it originated had reached the acme of its persecution. With regard to the whole transaction in relation to that horse, any unprejudiced mind would acquit Mr. Bourne of all improper conduct, while it would decide that he had been the subject of a most iniquitous imposition. He knew nothing of the qualities or value of such property; and confiding in the honor and integrity of a man who took advantage of his want of judgment in that particular, imposed upon him an animal which would have been a *hard bargain as a gratuity; an animal worn out, diseased, and good for nothing!*

'The charge of falsehood exhibited by the Lexington Presbytery against Mr. Bourne originated in the rancor of a disappointed political faction. During an electioneering canvass in which party feelings raged with considerable violence, Mr. Bourne expressed his belief that he should not vote at the election. But changing his view of the propriety of remaining neutral, when the election day came, he went to the polls and voted. By thus exercising his privilege as a citizen, he enkindled against himself a flame of hostility which it seems nothing but death can extinguish.' ¹⁴

¹⁴ *Southern Religious Telegraph*, August 30, 1838.

Everything done by the General Assembly of 1818 merits careful scrutiny. In spite of innumerable references to its action on slavery, no writer on the subject appears to be aware of the fact that this General Assembly deposed George Bourne from the ministry and that the entire course of his prosecution from the beginning had turned upon his denunciation of slaveholding as a sin and his fiery advocacy of immediate abolition of slavery. Bourne has the distinction of being the first advocate in America of this fateful doctrine.

Not only did this Assembly uphold the action of the Lexington Presbytery with regard to Bourne, it passed an impressive condemnation of the evils connected with slavery, one that has been endlessly quoted as if pious sentiments were legislative enactments fully representing the mind of the Assembly. Rarely has the weakness of its conclusion been noticed. Oddly enough even the unanimity with which it was passed by an Assembly with a large Southern delegation has aroused no suspicions. It has always been assumed that it represented fully the attitude of this Assembly on the question of slavery. Such was not the case. Careful consideration of the relationship between Bourne's deposition and the subsequent resolution throws an entirely different light upon the action.

Bourne had appealed to the Assembly from the judgment of the Lexington Presbytery deposing him from the Office of the Gospel Ministry after a renewal of his trial on orders from the General Assembly of 1817. The General Assembly affirmed that judgment. This was the final step in a process of litigation which had been three years in the making. Bourne's appeal was before the Assembly from May 26 to May 28. The Presbytery was represented by Baxter and Speece. The onus of the charges lay in the antislavery position of Bourne and the provocative manner in which he had made the conduct of his neighbors illustrative of his views. This emerges clearly from the outlines of the prosecution and defense. The two basic doctrines of the organized antislavery movement begun 15 years later were advocacy of the immediate abolition of slavery and the sin of those who remained slaveholders. No one was deceived. The facts were well known, and on both points the decision of the Assembly was precisely what the defenders of

slavery desired. There had been no particular antipathy toward slavery, only vigorous condemnation of its detractors.

The slave power within the Church, a minority of course but a fairly numerous and important one, had won its victory. The note to menstealing in Question 142 was to be deleted on the grounds of its illegality. The exponent of immediate emancipation and the sin of slavery was deposed. That man was George Bourne, an extraordinary man, in his wide reading, in his emotional reactions to what he observed, in his controversial gifts, and in his reckless courage. His deposition was what the ardent proslavery men desired above everything else. What matter then if, in the interest of church unity, the General Assembly should pass a strong admonition for good conduct on the part of slaveholders in their relations with slaves, and what more gratifying to all concerned than support for it by the slaveholders themselves.

This policy of appeasement, long continued in the churches and in the political parties, is clearly revealed by the composition of the membership of the General Assembly of 1818. Theoretically, an Assembly was composed of ministers and elders in equal numbers, elected as representatives of every Presbytery in the land. Actually, the ministers invariably outnumbered the elders because attendance was their main business while elders were frequently detained at home by the exigencies of their secular work. The roll of the General Assembly of 1818 included 85 ministers and 54 elders. Six additional delegates from Congregational churches in New England were present, making a total of 145. Twenty ministers and 13 elders came from slave country—Delaware to Mississippi. Many of these were slaveholders; all had slaveholders in their congregations. Many of the other members were opposed to slavery, although certainly not a majority of them at this early date. Unanimity on any strong action having to do with slavery was out of the question.

No action, therefore, touching slavery could have been taken on its merits alone. The effect such action would have had on the Southern section of the Church must always be carefully considered. If it appeared to be a measure that might be unacceptable to that segment of the Church, it had to be toned

down or given up. Otherwise the Southerners would withdraw and constitute an Assembly of their own. No matter how strong a majority otherwise might be secured for an antislavery measure, this possibility of a secession inevitably required its neutralization or abandonment.

Ashbel Green had been a member of the committee in charge of the preparation and later the printing of the notes (of which the antislavery note was one) in the official Constitution of the Presbyterian Church. He had written the long wordy statement adopted by the General Assembly of 1816 ordering the deletion of that antislavery note.¹⁵ After Bourne's conviction and deposition for the second time, Green chaired a committee given the task of writing a report embracing the position of the Assembly on slavery. It is not a mark of disrespect, quite the contrary, to say that Green was a master strategist in ecclesiastical circles. He had on the committee George A. Baxter, Bourne's relentless pursuer, and Dyer Burgess, an antislavery preacher. Officially or unofficially, Green was chairman of the committee, and said that he wrote the report, as chairmen of committees are usually expected to do.¹⁶

Burgess had been withholding communion from slaveholders since going to Ohio in 1816. He was as firm in his denunciation of slavery as Bourne, and at one time barely escaped hanging by irate slaveholders on an Ohio River boat. The Synod of Ohio had some powerful antislavery preachers, including John Rankin, Jesse Lockhart, James Gilliland, Joshua L. Wilson, and Dyer Burgess. The Synod, with Gilliland as moderator, in October, 1817, took under consideration a request from the Miami Presbytery for an explanation of the term manstealing. Burgess carried a memorial to the General Assembly to that effect and was placed on the committee with Baxter and Green. Two more powerful opponents on the slavery question could not have been chosen. In the day of his humiliation, Bourne had scored a victory. The Synod of Ohio already was requesting clarification of the term "manstealing." The combined efforts of the committee, recognized as the high-

¹⁵ *Minutes of the General Assembly*, 631-633.

¹⁶ J. H. Jones, ed., *The Life of Ashbel Green* (New York, 1849), 417.

water mark in antislavery action taken by any General Assembly before the Civil War, is a masterpiece of equivocation achieved by studiously evading the fateful question about man-stealing.

We consider the voluntary enslaving of one part of the human race by another, as a gross violation of the most precious and sacred rights of human nature; as utterly inconsistent with the law of God, which requires us to love our neighbour as ourselves, and as totally irreconcilable with the spirit and principles of the gospel of Christ, which enjoin that 'all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them.' Slavery creates a paradox in the moral system; it exhibits rational, accountable, and immortal beings in such circumstances as scarcely to leave them the power of moral action. It exhibits them dependent on the will of others, whether they shall receive religious instruction; whether they shall know and worship the true God; whether they shall enjoy the ordinances of the gospel; whether they shall perform the duties and cherish the endearments of husbands and wives, parents and children, neighbours and friends; whether they shall preserve their chastity and purity, or regard the dictates of justice and humanity. Such are some of the consequences of slavery—consequences not imaginary, but which connect themselves with its very existence. The evils to which the slave is always exposed often take place in fact, and in their very worst degree and form; and where all of them do not take place, as we rejoice to say in many instances, through the influence of the principles of humanity and religion on the mind of masters, they do not—still the slave is deprived of his natural right, degraded as a human being, and exposed to the danger of passing into the hands of a master who may inflict upon him all the hardships and injuries which inhumanity and avarice may suggest.

From this view of the consequences resulting from the practice into which Christian people have most inconsistently fallen, of enslaving a portion of their brethren of mankind—for 'God hath made of one blood all nations of men to dwell on the face of the earth'—it is manifestly the duty of all Christians who enjoy the light of the present day, when the inconsistency of slavery, both with the dictates of humanity and religion, has been demonstrated,

and is generally seen and acknowledged, to use their honest, earnest, and unwearied endeavors, to correct the errors of former times, and as speedily as possible to efface this blot on our holy religion, and to obtain the complete abolition of slavery throughout Christendom, and if possible throughout the world.

We rejoice that the Church to which we belong commenced as early as any other in the country, the good work of endeavoring to put an end to slavery, and that in the same work many of its members have ever since been, and now are, among the most active, vigorous, and efficient labourers. We do, indeed, tenderly sympathize with those portions of our Church and our country where the evil of slavery has been entailed upon them; where a great, and the most virtuous part of the community abhor slavery, and wish its extermination as sincerely as any others—but where the number of slaves, their ignorance, and their vicious habits generally, render an immediate and universal emancipation inconsistent alike with the safety and happiness of the master and the slave. With those who are thus circumstanced, we repeat that we tenderly sympathize. At the same time, we earnestly exhort them to continue, and if possible to increase their exertions to effect a total abolition of slavery. We exhort them to suffer no greater delay to take place in this most interesting concern, than a regard to the public welfare truly and indispensably demands.

As our country has inflicted a most grievous injury on the unhappy Africans, by bringing them into slavery, we cannot indeed urge that we should add a second injury to the first, by emancipating them in such manner as that they will be likely to destroy themselves or others. But we do think, that our country ought to be governed in this matter by no other consideration than an honest and impartial regard to the happiness of the injured party, uninfluenced by the expense or inconvenience which such a regard may involve. We, therefore, warn all who belong to our denomination of Christians against unduly extending this plea of necessity; against making it a cover for the love and practice of slavery, or a pretense for not using efforts that are lawful and practicable, to extinguish this evil.

And we, at the same time, exhort others to forbear harsh censures, and uncharitable reflections on their brethren, who unhappily live among slaves whom they cannot immediately set free; but

who, at the same time, are really using all their influence and all their endeavors, to bring them into a state of freedom, as soon as a door for it can be safely opened.

Having thus expressed our views of slavery, and of the duty indispensably incumbent on all Christians to labour for its complete extinction, we proceed to recommend, and we do it with all the earnestness and solemnity which the momentous subject demands, a particular attention to the following points.

We recommend to all our people to patronize and encourage the Society lately formed, for colonizing in Africa, the land of their ancestors, the free people of colour in our country. We hope that much good may result from the plans and efforts of this Society. And while we exceedingly rejoice to have witnessed its origin and organization among the holders of slaves, as giving an unequivocal pledge of their desires to deliver themselves and their Country from the calamity of slavery; we hope that those portions of the American union whose inhabitants are by a gracious providence more favourably circumstanced, will cordially, and liberally, and earnestly co-operate with their brethren, in bringing about the great end contemplated.

We recommend to all the members of our religious denomination, not only to permit, but to facilitate and encourage the instruction of their slaves in the principles and duties of the Christian religion; by granting them liberty to attend on the preaching of the gospel, when they have opportunity; by favouring the instruction of them in the Sabbath schools, wherever those schools can be formed; and by giving them all other proper advantages for acquiring the knowledge of their duty both to God and to man. We are perfectly satisfied, that it is incumbent on all Christians to communicate religious instruction to those who are under their authority, so that the doing of this in the case before us, so far from operating as some have apprehended that it might, as an incitement to insubordination and insurrection would, on the contrary, operate as the most powerful means for the prevention of those evils.

We enjoin it on all church sessions and Presbyteries, under the care of the Assembly, to discountenance, and so far as possible to prevent all cruelty of whatever kind in the treatment of slaves; especially the cruelty of separating husband and wife, parents and

children, and that which consists in selling slaves to those who will either themselves deprive these unhappy people of the blessings of the gospel, or who will transport them to places where the gospel is not proclaimed, or where it is forbidden to slaves to attend upon its institutions. And if it shall ever happen that a Christian professor in our communion shall sell a slave who is also in Communion and good standing with our Church, contrary to his or her will, and inclination, it ought immediately to claim the particular attention of the proper judicature; and unless there be such peculiar circumstances attending the case as can but seldom happen, it ought to be followed without delay by a suspension of the offender from all the privileges of the church, till he repent—, and make all the reparation in his power to the injured party.¹⁷

It is paradoxical that proslavery writers consistently accused the Church of taking an ultra antislavery course and that the opponents of slavery maintained that the Church when it ventured to speak at all on the question was so subservient to the slave power as to be considered the bulwark of American slavery. Without venturing an opinion at this point on the long term position of Church establishments, it must be said that this pronouncement of the General Assembly of 1818 was neither strong action nor strongly antislavery.

No action ever taken by an Assembly has been so often quoted in debate. In its expression of antislavery sentiment, it went further than any other Assembly deliverance before the Civil War. The unanimity of an Assembly containing many Southerners and some slaveholders gave its pungent phrases unusual weight against a defender of slavery in the growing controversy. It was accepted as the stated attitude of the Presbyterian Church; from it all other acts advanced or receded in debate, sermons, pamphlets, books. The Assembly reiterated it in the days when it was incapable of any other pronouncement through fear of separation.

There were, however, no teeth in this resolution. It was not a rule to be obeyed under threat of expulsion. It did not provide for supervision of the master-slave relationship. It did not forbid ministers to own slaves or to sell slaves. It did not even

¹⁷ "Slavery," *Acts of the Supreme Judicatory*, 273-278.

anticipate future action by general assemblies. It was a feeble recital of *evils* associated with the system of slavery, not a respectable exposition of the diabolical subordination of innocent and unoffending persons. It expressed "tender sympathy," not once but twice, for slaveholders whose fathers had bequeathed to them the burden of slavery. It accepted without protest several false claims. The first was that slaves were so brutal and degraded that immediate emancipation would be dangerous; this was the argument for gradualism. A second was that a strong effort was being made by slaveholders to terminate slavery; this was at a time when the Congress was in a turmoil over their increasing efforts to extend slavery to the area west of the Mississippi. It endorsed in strong language the Colonization Society, greatest storm cellar ever devised by politicians to avoid personal commitment for or against emancipation. It said nothing about the sin of manstealing, carefully avoiding any mention of it in that connection. It condemned criticism of the institution. In all respects the emphasis was not on rights and equality of all men but upon welfare and harmony within the Church. The resolution was a pious declaration, both a generalization and a rationalization, an ever ready defense for inaction. It was a fitting climax to the endorsement of expulsion from the Gospel ministry of a great intellect, and man of courage, by what, on careful examination, bears all the markings of a Kangaroo Court. All was done apparently without considering the eternal verity of principles already expounded by this man, because they certainly had his letters to Davidson and many must have read *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable*.

Whatever has been said, or whatever will be said, about the nature of the pronouncement of 1818 must be considered against the background of Baxter's own interpretation, because he was the one central actor in the entire drama from Bourne's first trial to the adoption of the committee report and because he, if anyone, knew the attitude of slaveholders generally toward it. In the spring of 1838, he offered the following resolutions in the West Hanover Presbytery in direct reference to the report of the Committee of which he was a member in the General Assembly of 1818. These resolutions speak for themselves without comment.

Presbytery are fully convinced that Abolition is fanatical in its spirit, directly contrary to the Holy Scriptures, & if circulated in the Southern country, would be productive of the most dreadful consequences;—therefore:

1. *Resolved*, That this Presbytery in its ecclesiastical arrangements will do every thing in its power to discountenance & oppose abolition principle.

2. *Resolved*, that if any party should get the ascendancy in one church, which would introduce abolition discussion & abuse into the General Assembly; that this Presbytery will in an orderly manner withdraw from that body.

3. *Resolved*, that it is inexpedient to take any step at this time on former acts of the Assembly. If such acts are of an abolition character, they are plainly unconstitutional, unscriptural, & void, & ought to be disregarded. Besides, those acts have long been a dead letter, & the revival of them at this time by public discussion would have a tendency to violate the laws of our State & the peace of our country.¹⁸

¹⁸ Minutes of the West Hanover Presbytery, Village Church, Charlotte Courthouse, April 21, 1838, Union Theological Seminary Library, Richmond.

CHAPTER V

BOURNE'S CONTRIBUTION TO ANTISLAVERY THOUGHT

THE General Assembly of 1815 where Bourne presented his Overture denouncing slaveholding by members of the Presbyterian Church and where the Synod of Ohio asked embarrassing questions relating to the status of migrating slaveholding members met in Philadelphia from May 18 to May 30, 1815. Bourne's *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* appeared early in 1816 with a postscript dated September 6. Viewed from the standpoints of the date of its publication, the ideas expressed in it, and its influence upon the leaders of the organized antislavery movement, it is the most important book published during the slavery controversy. Yet, this book was completely ignored as Bourne's case moved relentlessly forward to final deposition in 1818.

The very nature of the book indicates tension; it has definite limitations. Every page shows a seeming anxiety on the part of the author to justify his right and compelling obligation as an ordained minister, to condemn slavery. This point should be thoroughly understood in relation to the entire slavery controversy. Any criticism of slavery in a community dominated by slaveholders evoked prompt and severe retaliation. Vicious attacks upon Quakers, generally, and upon Benjamin Franklin, in particular, in the Congress during George Washington's administration are proof of it at an early date. John Rankin of Ohio had to choose between silence or the certainty of proscription by his Presbytery in South Carolina as Bourne did in Virginia. Bourne was tried, wrote his book, and went to Philadelphia. Rankin wrote his book many years later.¹ Bourne's book, as shall be seen, and Bourne's ideas gave survival

¹ John Rankin, *Letters on American Slavery, Addressed to Mr. Thomas Rankin, Merchant at Middlebrook, Augusta County, Virginia* (Boston, 1833).

to William Lloyd Garrison's *Liberator*, and Rankin's book was published in its entirety in that journal. The Grimké sisters also left South Carolina and never dared return. James G. Birney was forced out of Alabama and then out of Kentucky. John Fee joined William Allen of Alabama and James Thome of Kentucky at Lane Seminary. He went back to Kentucky and was almost killed, but Thome and Allen remained in the North. These are only a few examples. Wealth, intelligence, prominent family connections saved no one. No evidence to the contrary that will stand the test of historical criticism has ever been produced. Some people left the slave country because of violence or threats of violence against them; some left because they simply could not live in an atmosphere of oppression. There was no such thing as free enquiry and discussion on the slavery question. Not only did the slaveholders suppress criticism of slavery by ministers of the Gospel, they brought the churches to a defense of slavery. They did this by insisting that slaveholding was a political question, not a matter of morals; and the churches, accommodating themselves to the prevailing social philosophy in the area, pronounced the dictum that sins which were sanctioned by government were not personal sins. The individual was not open to a charge of evil-doing if the act was legally permissive.²

Previous to the Bourne episode of 1815, the Presbyterian Church had pronounced against slavery but had failed to take disciplinary action against slaveholders. The same was true of the Methodist Church. James G. Birney faced the situation eventually by meeting the opposition on its own ground and accepting the challenge of a political contest, but he had to go to a free state to do it. The result was the Liberty party, political action against slavery and emancipation by force.³ John G.

² See especially, James G. Birney, *The American Churches the Bulwarks of American Slavery* (London, 1840), 16-18; William Goodell, *Slavery and Anti-Slavery; A History of the Great Struggle in Both Hemispheres; with a View of the Slavery Question in the United States* (New York, 1855), 145-146. For a general treatment of the subject, see Dwight L. Dumond, *Antislavery: the Crusade for Freedom in America* (Ann Arbor, 1961), 343-350.

³ The best history of the origin and growth of the Liberty party is Betty Fladeland, *James Gillespie Birney: Slaveholder to Abolitionist* (Ithaca, 1955). See also, Dumond, *Antislavery*, 290-305.

Fee, who was born in Kentucky while Bourne was writing *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable*, published one of his own on the Bible and slavery, in Kentucky, three years after Bourne died, but he had been disinherited by his parents, censored by his Synod, clubbed, stoned, and mobbed, and finally driven from the state.⁴ The Reverend Jacob Gruber discovered the situation when he was brought to trial and defended by Roger B. Taney for preaching a sermon which included some remarks against slavery at a Methodist camp meeting in Maryland in 1819, three years after Bourne's book was published.⁵

Bourne was thrown out of his church because his Presbytery was against him. Had he been in the Chillicothe Presbytery with John Rankin, James Gilliland, Samuel Crothers, and James Dickey, he would have been secure. The Chillicothe Presbytery was in Ohio, not in Virginia, but the stalwart Presbyterian preachers who made it strongly antislavery had been compelled to leave the slave country as the only alternative to silence on the subject. Bourne knew quite well what was going to happen. He said in his book that he had weighed the consequences, that he fully expected most people to become his enemies, but that he could not see his way clear to remain silent. His book, therefore, cannot be judged solely on its merits as an antislavery manual, because it was intended to be a justification of Bourne's right to condemn slaveholding *as a sin*. He did so, and he did it well. He knew the Bible, and he knew his Confession of Faith and Catechisms probably as few men ever have known them. This was equally the strength and the weakness of the book.

Bourne was fighting a losing battle—a battle which was to continue for many years in the churches and eventually in the political arena. The issue was the responsibility of ministers of the Gospel to carry on the great work of the Reformation, to denounce sin in every shape and form both private and public,

⁴ John G. Fee, *An Anti-Slavery Manual, being An Examination in the Light of the Bible, and of Facts, into the Moral and Social Wrongs of American Slavery, with a Remedy for the Evil* (Maysville, 1848).

⁵ David Martin, *Trial of Rev. Jacob Gruber, Minister in the Methodist Episcopal Church, at the March Term, 1829, in the Frederick County Court, for a Misdemeanor* (Fredericktown, 1819).

and to serve faithfully as instruments of God to carry forward the salvation of the world, and as tribunes of the people to protect them from cruel oppression. He saw but dimly how moral law and natural law lead to the same basic concept of the equality of all men in the sight of God. Not until the slave power by its arrogance brought men like Elijah Lovejoy, James G. Birney, Gerrit Smith, and Theodore D. Weld to the defense of man's natural rights was the doom of slavery sealed.⁶ Bourne played a tremendously important role in the emancipation of the slaves, but he could not, and sensed that he could not, do what has not been accomplished in 150 years since, namely, gain acceptance of the doctrine of equality for all men. If he could have brought the church around to his point of view, the battle would have been won at this point.

Bourne had not gained his knowledge of slavery from books. He had not made a study of antislavery *literature*; nor does his knowledge of the antislavery *movement* seem to have been extensive. He did, however, know slavery and slaveholders by association. He possessed a heart easily moved by pity. He had a fiery, impetuous nature, prone to protest vigorously against everything savoring of injustice and oppression. Slavery as he saw it was an intolerable evil, but more importantly it was sin, and he said so. He knew the distinguished work of Henry Gregoire with its emphasis upon the right of every person to freedom regardless of origin, complexion, faith, or degree of wealth and that of Thomas Branagan with its denunciation of slaveholders as robbers and murderers.⁷ He quoted from the

⁶ [Theodore D. Weld], *A Statement of the Reason Which Induced the Students of Lane Seminary to Dissolve Their Connection with That Institution* (Cincinnati, 1834); Gerrit Smith, *Speech before the New York Anti-Slavery Society at Peterboro, October 22, 1835* (Peterboro, 1835); Edward Beecher, *Narrative of Riots at Alton; in Connection with the Death of Rev. Elijah P. Lovejoy* (Alton, 1838).

⁷ Henry Gregoire, *An Enquiry Concerning the Intellectual and Moral Faculties and Literature of Negroes; Followed with an Account of the Life and Works of Fifteen Negroes and Mulattoes, Distinguished in Science, Literature and the Arts* (Brooklyn, 1810); Thomas Branagan, *Avenia, or a Tragical Poem, on the Oppression of the Human Species; and Infringement on the Rights of Man* (Philadelphia, 1805); Thomas Branagan, *A Preliminary Essay, on the Oppression of the Exiled Sons of Africa. Consisting of Animadversions on the Impolicy and Barbarity of the Deliterious Commerce and Subsequent Slavery of the Human Species* (Philadelphia, 1804).

speeches of the British statesmen Edmund Burke, William Pitt, and William Wilberforce; but apparently he never had read the antislavery literature of the Revolutionary period in America, particularly Samuel Hopkins' *Dialogue* or David Cooper's *Serious Address*.⁸ He made no reference to Granville Sharp, Thomas Clarkson, John Parrish, Anthony Benezet, or John Woolman.⁹ He knew David Rice's book because he referred to it and quoted from it more often than from any other except the Bible. Rice was a very distinguished Presbyterian who had been reared in Virginia and had preached there before going to Kentucky.¹⁰ He knew of Nicholas Snethen, an itinerant Methodist clergyman who had emancipated slaves acquired by his marriage, a founder of the Methodist Protestant Church, a private secretary to Bishop Francis Asbury, and sometime Chaplain of the House of Representatives.

Bourne quoted also from Daniel Bryan, relatively unknown to antislavery historians to this day, whose *Mountain Muse* he had published; from John Wesley, whose biography he had written during his residence in Baltimore; and from Rowland Hill, the English preacher from Cambridge who had been thwarted constantly by high church dignitaries because of his itinerant evangelistic tours. His two main sources, however, upon whose works he relied most heavily, next to the works of

⁸ [Samuel Hopkins], *A Dialogue Concerning the Slavery of the Africans: Shewing it to be the Duty and Interest of the American States to Emancipate All Their African Slaves* (Norwich, 1776); David Cooper, *A Serious Address to the Rulers of America* (Trenton, 1783).

⁹ Short titles of these important works which Bourne may or may not have used are as follows: Granville Sharp, *An Essay on Slavery, Proving from Scripture Its Inconsistency with Humanity and Religion* (Burlington, 1773); Granville Sharp, *A Representation of the Injustice and Dangerous Tendency of Tolerating Slavery; or of Admitting the Least Claim of Private Property in the Persons of Men, in England* (London, 1769); Thomas Clarkson, *An Essay on the Slavery and Commerce of the Human Species* (London, 1786); John Parrish, *Remarks on the Slavery of the Black People* (Philadelphia, 1806); Anthony Benezet, *Brief Considerations on Slavery, and the Expediency of Its Abolition* (Burlington, 1773); John Woolman, *Consideration on Keeping Negroes; Recommended to the Professors of Christianity of Every Denomination* (Philadelphia, 1762).

¹⁰ David Rice, *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy* (Lexington, Ky., 1792; Philadelphia, 1792; London, 1793; New York, 1804; New York, 1812).

David Rice and Thomas Branagan, were John Brown and Thomas Scott. Brown's *Dictionary of the Bible* and Scott's *Commentaries on the Bible* both denounced slavery and slaveholders in strong and unequivocal terms.¹¹ Bourne used them, and rendered a great service to the cause in calling them to the attention of his readers. Whoever used them, and most educated preachers did use them in preparing their sermons, was exposed regularly to strong antislavery doctrine.

Branagan had demanded immediate, uncompensated, and universal emancipation. Rice had said that judges must give precedence to God's laws over man made laws in their decisions. There was ample room for argument on all of these questions. What Bourne did was to wipe out all room for argument about the evils of slavery and about the methods, time, and universality of emancipation. Slavery was manstealing. Theft was an enormous sin. Complete, immediate abandonment was required. No churches and precious few individuals accepted Bourne's position. Meanwhile the argument continued on a comprehensive scale.

It is here that one begins to understand the real Bourne. He started with the premise that since the Mosaic Law, the teaching of Paul, the Confession of Faith, the Methodist Discipline, and the Constitution of the United States were all entirely hostile to slavery, it necessarily followed that "every man who holds slaves and who pretends to be a Christian or a Republican, is either an incurable idiot who cannot distinguish good from evil, or an obdurate sinner who resolutely defies every social, moral and divine requisition. Evangelical charity induces the hope that he is an ignoramus." A slaveholder, Bourne held, was not a Christian because he usurped the authority of God. Slavery was impious primarily because it subverted Divine Authority. The slaveholder exercised complete control over the will of the slave, denying him all intellectual improvement, religious instruction, and moral responsibility. This

¹¹ Thomas Scott, *The Holy Bible Containing the Old and New Testaments with Original Notes, Practical Observations and Copious Marginal References* (Philadelphia, 1805); John Brown, *A Dictionary of the Holy Bible . . . Forming a Sacred Commentary; a Body of Scripture History, Chronology, and Divinity* (2 vols., Pittsburgh, 1807).

denial of moral agency in relations to other men and to God reduced the slave to the status of beast of the field.

Slavery was an enormous sin within the area of revealed religion. No one could read Bourne's book believing otherwise, but the proof from necessity came largely from the Old Testament to which he made no less than 100 references. Slavery was also a deadly virus within the body politic, threatening total annihilation of democratic institutions. It embraced and sustained a philosophy of racialism destructive of man's natural rights. It denied to the nation the potential contribution, intellectually, spiritually, and economically, of a large segment of the population. It plundered the slaves of their inalienable rights as men.

It was easy, then, it is easy now, to say that the vehement denunciation of all slaveholders as sinners of the first rank was uncharitable and unwise in that it alienated from the cause many conservative men. Some men in the movement urged Garrison at a later date to moderate the tone of his attack upon slavery and slaveholders. But it was Bourne, not Garrison, speaking in the *Liberator*, and Bourne was standing on even more solid ground than was Garrison. Bourne quoted from Charles James Fox on this point that Bible teaching must not be toned down. "They call themselves moderate men; but upon this subject I neither feel nor desire to feel, anything like the sentiment of moderation."¹² Bourne held that moderation in the denunciation of sin was an absurdity and that one could not take away Christian truth from the body of doctrine and combine what was left with wickedness to make pronouncements palatable for sinners. Preachers could not temporize with truth. Reformation could not be achieved by making slaveholders feel comfortable. Kidnapping and hypocrisy must be reprobated. Injustice and robbery were incompatible with Christianity. Slavery was condemned by the Bible.

Certainly there was no comfort to slaveholders in Bourne's contention that they were not honest men but thieves and that they could not be Christians until they heeded the command: "Let him that stole, steal no more." They were as guilty as

¹² *The Book And Slavery Irreconcilable* (Philadelphia, 1806), 4-5 (*infra*, 106).

African slave merchants. It was a farce for a person who bought and sold children to pretend that he was a Christian; yet Christians defended slavery. It was Bourne's belief that the strongest supporters of slavery were members of the Church and that their treatment of slaves was so scandalous as to justify censure. They needed to show remorse, reformation, and restitution. Slavery was destroying the Church. It was, said Bourne, in the words of Pitt, "a system of incurable injustice, the complication of every species of iniquity, the greatest practical evil that has ever affected the human race, and the severest and most extensive calamity recorded in the history of the world."¹³

Bourne still was not through with the charge of theft, the one charge above all others which enraged his slaveholding colleagues in the Presbytery. It required all of one's senses, he insisted, to believe that manstealing should ever have existed and been defended among Christ's disciples, but the human heart is so corrupt and deceitful that the slave system was incorporated in the civil and religious institutions of every land of freedom. The tendency to immorality is an innate characteristic of the human race. The proof lay in traffic in the bodies and souls of men in a land where precepts of the Gospel determined duties and responsibilities. Trading in human flesh in Africa was no different from slavery in the United States. Slaves were kidnapped from their homes in Africa and from their mothers' wombs in America. Slaveholders were worse than horse thieves. When the day should arrive that Christianity gained supremacy over slavery, the epitaph of slavery should read: "Here lies the enemy of man, whose principles were irreligion, whose dispositions were cruelty, whose language was falsehood, whose conduct was injustice, and whose pretensions were hypocrisy."¹⁴

Finally, Bourne barely touched upon three issues that were to become increasingly important through the years. The first was embraced in a quotation from Wood's *Dictionary of the Bible*.¹⁵ In some respects it was the most significant statement in the entire book, expounding the doctrine of the equality of

¹³ *Ibid.*, 12 (*infra*, 110-111).

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 39 (*infra*, 129).

¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 32-34 (*infra*, 123-125).

all men, universality of rights, and invariability of moral principles in every age and place. The purchase of innocent persons, if the right actually did exist, must be a common right possessed by everyone. The natural rights of man being as sacred in Africa as in America, if Africans could be enslaved, the son of one's neighbor could also be enslaved. The second was a justification by Biblical authority of the flight of fugitives. Christians were under compulsion to give them aid and provide for their safety in flight. No man could assist in their recapture without violating the law of God, yet slaveholders advertised for the return of fugitives and claimed the right to kill. The third was a comparison of the attitude of whites as masters and what it would be should the situation be reversed and they in turn suffer dissolution of social relationships, family ties, and ability to make decisions. Slavery did to the Negro that from which whites would recoil in horror.

Bourne's book is heavy reading, but at times he wrote smoothly and with keen perception, as in this sensitive compendium of slavery:

From the dawning of life until aged decrepitude, barbarity and injustice are the Slave's uniform portion; his existence is abbreviated, and dissolution is his only comfort. His terrestrial pilgrimage is toil and pain; his corse is interred without sympathy; no Christian recollections mingle around the grave which entombs the sleeping dust; he lived in scorn, his death excites no regret but the loss of gain, and he is deposited in oblivion, until the morning of the resurrection.¹⁸

Bourne had suffered greatly because of his hostility to slavery. He knew it was wicked by any possible standard, but he could not persuade many people to agree with him. He was deeply in debt, and he was about to be put on trial by his church. His ecclesiastical life was in jeopardy. So it was that he brought to his support every statement from the Old Testament which could by the widest possible interpretation be made to apply to the institution. When read as assembled they made a profound impression. It is as if they were the judicial pronounce-

¹⁸ *Ibid.*, 83 (*infra*, 157-158).

ments of the Judge of all the earth. He buttressed them with quotations from those antislavery books which had come to his attention. When completed it was a unique and terrific indictment of slavery itself and of slaveholders. He knew that he dared not publish it in Virginia. In the lexicon of slavery, it was incendiary literature of the highest order, and in all probability it was libelous.

Bourne, a poor man indeed, had the book published in Philadelphia in a small edition. For 15 years it was almost unnoticed. Such was the fate of almost all books in the early years of the nation. Then William Lloyd Garrison, who had just joined Benjamin Lundy in Baltimore, found and devoured it. The effect produced in him was revolutionary. Its insistence on immediate, universal, uncompensated emancipation became his program and in time that of the American Anti-Slavery Society. Its quotations became the stock in trade not only of Garrison but of many of the leading antislavery men. Its excerpts from the Bible were welcomed by Garrison in their entirety. Its accusatory vehemence and its tone as that of the world's judge and executioner Garrison made his own, speaking as if from personal experience. The principles advocated by Garrison were every one of them to be found in Bourne's work, with the exception of his detailed attack upon colonization. Bourne said little about that because the colonization society was not organized until a year after his book was published. He said little about the African slave trade and its middle passage because it had been prohibited in 1807. There is, however, substantial evidence that Bourne contributed heavily to Garrison's work on colonization at a later date.

There was a definite relationship between Bourne's condition when he wrote *Picture of Slavery in the United States of America* in 1834 and the difficulties surrounding him when he wrote *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable*. The slaveholders had persecuted him relentlessly. They had driven him out of the South and out of the church. Nearly two decades later, weary years by any test, he published a book which in large part was a revision of the earlier philippic. There was no modification of the earlier indictment of slavery but more clarity and assurance and much less of the old defensive attitude. The

slaveholding ministers of the Gospel who had brought him to trial in the Presbytery were not named, but the story of their ill-treatment of slaves was retold in part. Bourne gave complete details with names in Weld's *American Slavery As It Is* five years later. Those men have paid heavily in the annals of history for what they did in 1815. They kept in the files of the Presbytery Bourne's letters to A. B. Davidson, thus preserving a dual record of those fateful events, and they kept them without any recorded denial, thus nullifying the claim of some historians that such things could not possibly have happened.

Reemphasis of the sin of slaveholding is not the important feature of *Picture of Slavery*. Bourne published a third book on the Bible and slavery just before his death entitled *Condensed Anti-Slavery Bible Argument*. In writing the third book, he had the benefit of 30 years of discussion in antislavery circles and particularly Theodore D. Weld's *Bible Argument*. Neither in the *Picture of Slavery* nor in his *Condensed Anti-Slavery Bible Argument* did he make any significant changes or additions to the original thesis.

The third section of his *Picture of Slavery* was a renewed discussion of how to abolish slavery. This was the theme of his attack upon slavery in 1815 and the same solution—exclusion of all slaveholders from the Church and from public office. Years of personal frustration had taught Bourne the futility of an appeal to slaveholders. He knew now that neither the slaveholders themselves, the ministers of the Gospel, nor the church congregations were going to do anything about slavery. His appeal, therefore, was to the women and the churches of the free states for a continuation of the petition campaign. It was an approach to the idea of political action. The entire anti-slavery movement would be moving in that direction within a decade.

It was at this point in his career that Bourne pulled together various earlier references to the effects of slavery upon both slaves and slaveholders. The result was a far more graphic indictment of the institution and a thesis more infuriating to slaveholders than the sin of slavery. It was embodied in the second part of *The Picture of Slavery* entitled "Natural Effects of Slavery on the Slaveholders" and in a book entitled *Slavery*

Illustrated in Its Effect upon Women and Domestic Society published in 1837.

Slavery, declared Bourne, inflamed slaveholders with self-conceit. It made them hard-hearted, callous, and insensible to suffering. It made them licentious, unfaithful, and irreligious. It made them irascible, violent, and cruel. He dwelt at length upon their complete lack of humility, benevolence, and virtue. He emphasized the development of class consciousness coupled with contempt for people in distress. Then he struck with deadly accuracy at the most vulnerable aspect of slavery and for which there has never been a defense: the complete lack of delicacy in both public and private relations with female slaves. Specifically, he enumerated the well known inducements for child bearing, the shameless exposure of women for sale, the growth of a large and important mulatto population all of which bespoke adultery on a grandiose scale. Bourne has been charged with overemphasis upon sex, but the almost complete freedom of access to a large class of females who were without any sort of protection was a powerful stimulus for the defense of slavery and the continued subordination of people of color after emancipation. In his *Slavery Illustrated in Its Effects upon Women*, Bourne added the humiliation and distress of the wives of slaveholders who were fully aware of conditions but as helpless to correct the evil as were the female slaves.

Slavery, said Bourne once more, converted men into beasts of burden, abolished all of their natural rights, took away all of the attributes of manhood, destroyed personality, and made them into things to be used and destroyed. Slaveholders exercised this tyranny over other men without restraints, upholding their power by law, by cruelty, and by suppression of all criticism. They controlled the legislatures, the courts, and the churches. Then, as with the gift of prophecy, Bourne said:

The period has arrived when slavery must be entirely abolished. To tolerate its abominations for one hour, extends a pestilence throughout the union, adds fuel to the volcano which is ready to burst forth in all its devastating fury upon the republic, increases a mass of moral corruption which now is mortifying in the body politic, and with the most open provoking effrontery, calls for the

vengeance of heaven, and the retributive curse of God upon our guilty country.

Bourne's influence upon William Lloyd Garrison must be more fully explained because Garrison relied heavily upon Bourne and was shamefully negligent about making any acknowledgements. Garrison, a young newspaper editor, first became interested in antislavery in the summer of 1828 when Benjamin Lundy visited Boston in search of subscribers to his *Genius of Universal Emancipation*. Lundy was a colonizationist; Garrison became one. He cannot be said to have been familiar with any aspect of the preceding long controversy over slavery. Few people were, and few people are even today, else historians would never have given Garrison primacy in the crusade for freedom. His knowledge of governmental organization and constitutional theory did not extend beyond an off-hand expression of state rights. He circulated and sent to Congress a petition for an act abolishing slavery in the District of Columbia, with colonization. He gave an address at the Park Street Church in Boston, July 4, 1829, in which he endorsed gradual emancipation by state action, and colonization. "I acknowledge," he said, "that immediate and complete emancipation is not desirable. No rational man cherishes so wild a vision." His sons, in the life of their father, say of that speech and its aftermath:

But when he came to reflect upon the matter he saw that his feet were on the sand, and not the solid rock, so long as he granted slavery the right to exist for a single moment; that if human beings could be justly held in bondage one hour, they could be for days and weeks and years, and so on indefinitely, from generation to generation, and that the only way to deal with the system was to lay the axe at the root of the tree and demand *Immediate and Unconditional Emancipation*. This conviction forced itself upon his mind during the five or six weeks which elapsed between the delivery of his address and his departure for Baltimore, and when, after a fifteen day voyage by sea, he reached the latter city, sometime in August, 1829, and presented himself to Lundy, he lost no time in acquainting his partner with the change in his views, and the

necessity he should be under, if he joined him, of preaching the Gospel accordingly.¹⁷

This change from gradualism to immediatism is the sign of a radical change in Garrison's views and is an important turning point in his development. Garrison's sons say they derived their account of this event from his address at the Franklin Club dinner, October 14, 1878. They attribute it to his reflection on the matter. It was so important an about-face that it would seem something more than solitary reflection must have brought it about. The sons have definitely set it as happening between delivery of his address and his departure for Baltimore.

Let this be examined. The address was delivered on July 4, 1829. His sons admit in a curious "postscript," printed in volume one between pages xiv and xv, that their father "was familiar with *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* as early as September 13, 1830," because he quoted from it extensively in a letter bearing that date to the Reverend George Shepard. The fact is that Garrison was acquainted with Bourne's book more than a year before that date, and not with much else at that moment. That book is a *veritable manifesto of immediatism*. Garrison's change from gradualism to immediacy was due to his having secured a copy of Bourne's *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* and having read and made its content his own.

Garrison said, at the meeting of the American Anti-Slavery Society in Philadelphia, December 3-4, 1863, that "as soon as I got to Baltimore, I had my eyes opened in regard to the absurdity and delusion of gradual emancipation."¹⁸ Thus Garrison's sons said the reversal of his position on immediate emancipation came before he left Boston as a result of his own reflections, a most sudden and astonishing fact if true, and Garrison himself said the change happened as soon as he got to Baltimore. Either someone in Baltimore where Bourne had lived gave him the book or he got it from Lundy who had a magnificent library of antislavery publications. Garrison's sons,

¹⁷ Wendell P. and Francis J. Garrison, *William Lloyd Garrison 1805-1879: The Story of His Life, Told by His Children* (4 vols., New York, 1885-1889), I, 140.

¹⁸ *Antislavery Standard*, December 26, 1863.

according to the postscript, had never seen Bourne's book, and they gave Elizabeth Heyrich of England and James Duncan of Indiana the credit of being the first advocates of immediate emancipation.

That Bourne's book was responsible for Garrison's reversal is clearly shown by comparison of what Bourne said in his book and what Garrison's sons said. Bourne had written:

The system is so entirely corrupt, that it admits of no cure, but by a total and immediate, abolition. For a gradual emancipation is a virtual recognition of the right, and establishes the rectitude of the practice. If it be just for one moment, it is hallowed forever; and if it be inequitable, not a day should it be tolerated.¹⁹

Garrison's sons have just been quoted as saying their father realized

that if human beings could be justly held in bondage one hour, they could be for days, and weeks, and years, and so on indefinitely, from generation to generation, and that the only way to deal with the system was to lay the axe at the root of the tree, and demand *Immediate and Unconditional Emancipation*.

Curious, indeed, that Garrison had ideas so similar to Bourne's, by reflection!

This was only the beginning. Fourteen years had passed since Bourne had waged his campaign in the General Assembly to have the identification of slavery as a form of stealing accepted. He had written part of his *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* before his trial, but its completion had been delayed until 1816. For the first time, in the English speaking world, it advocated immediate, universal, and uncompensated emancipation. It thus established itself as one of the great landmarks of anti-slavery. Two years later the General Assembly had upheld his deposition by the Lexington Presbytery and his service at Germantown had come to an end.

Confronted with the immediate necessity of providing for his growing family, Bourne fell back on his last resource and began teaching in a school at Mt. Pleasant (Ossining), New

¹⁹ *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable*, 'Animadversions,' 10 (*infra*, 204).

York. The Presbyterian Church there invited him to become its pastor. Employing a deposed minister compelled it to leave the Hudson Presbytery, and it joined an irregular body, the Westchester Association. After about two years, in which Bourne had made friends of several of the neighboring Presbyterian ministers who sympathized with him, he petitioned the General Assembly of 1823 to restore him to the Gospel Ministry, thus showing how convinced he was that in time the injustice of his deposition would be clear to them. This petition was not accepted by the Assembly on the ground that Bourne had not abided by *their* sentence of deposition. The next year petitions from the churches of Mount Pleasant and Greensburg and from five ministers of the Gospel residing in the vicinity requesting that he be restored to the office of the ministry were sent to the General Assembly. The Reverend Ezra Styles Ely, elected Stated Clerk of the Assembly the following year, petitioned that Bourne on the profession of his penitence might be restored.

The General Assembly, in the light of these petitions, ordered the Presbytery of New York, within whose borders Bourne now resided, to take all of the necessary papers used in Bourne's trial, to receive testimony as to his character and deportment since his deposition, to consider the evidence of his repentance, and after careful examination of this material "to issue the case and either continue the sentence of deposition, or restore him, the said Bourne, to the Gospel Ministry, as they may judge proper." The committee of the New York Presbytery appointed to carry out these instructions made its report on August 31, 1824, as follows:

That they have proceeded to an investigation of the matters which they were enjoined to examine; that they have sought for information upon the various topics expressed in the resolution of presbytery; that they have made many inquiries, and received very explicit and copious details upon the points involved from very competent and highly credible witnesses; and are of opinion that Mr. Bourne should be restored to the Gospel Ministry—he professing his contrition for whatever may have been ecclesiastically irregular, or morally wrong in his deportment either before or since the act of

the Presbytery of Lexington . . . [and] that he be solemnly charged to remember, that want of prudence may be as great an obstacle to ministerial success as want of personal piety; and that he be exhorted to take heed unto himself, as well as to his doctrine.

The report of the Committee, headed by Gardiner Spring, was accepted; the Presbytery restored him to the ministry; and he took his seat as a member of the Presbytery.²⁰

It will be noted that in the above committee report Bourne professed his contrition only "for whatever may have been ecclesiastically irregular or morally wrong in his deportment." There is not a word about any change of mind on his part about the truth and validity of every assertion he made about slavery and manstealing. His regret was confined to his contumacious conduct and speech which were noted again and again at his trials and which Bourne himself admitted.

During his stay at Mt. Pleasant he wrote and published a volume entitled *Lectures on the Progress and Perfection of the Church of Christ*. His fame continued to spread, and sometime in 1824 he was called to take charge of the Congregational Church in Quebec as its first pastor. There is a dearth of information about his work during the next five years, but he certainly was employed in the study of church history, particularly of the Roman Catholics, in addition to his pastoral duties. In October, 1829, Bourne moved to New York City and in June, 1830, began publishing a periodical entitled the *Protestant*.

²⁰ *Records of the Presbytery of New York* (3 vols., New York, 1854), III. 172-173.

CHAPTER VI

THE LIBERATOR

GARRISON had two strokes of good fortune in rapid succession. He got hold of Bourne's *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* just in time to keep him from wandering off into a wilderness of colonization and gradualism and carried it back to Boston with him as an almost inexhaustible source of ideas in the early stages of his new publishing venture. Then, as by a miracle, he found Bourne in person newly installed as editor of the *Protestant* in New York City, writing about slavery also as an old professional, and willing to make contributions.

Bourne knew his Bible and his Bible commentaries from long study, and he knew slavery from personal observations. He had many years of argument, of reflection, and of writing on the subject behind him in 1830. Garrison had none of these advantages, not even familiarity with the Scriptures, and precious little of the available antislavery literature was any help to him in his new venture. He turned to Bourne's book and to Bourne personally for help; and it must be said, without humility.

Garrison began publishing the *Liberator* on January 1, 1831. It is in this newspaper and in relation to it that one finds indisputable evidence of his debt to Bourne. Bourne came to New York from his five year pastorate of the Congregational or Presbyterian Church of Quebec. He lived in or near New York from 1830 to his death in 1845. He was a violent opponent of the Roman Catholic Church and founded the *Protestant* which he edited and largely wrote. This was in 1830, the year before Garrison started the *Liberator* in Boston. Both men took an active part in the development of the American Anti-Slavery Society in its early years, but Garrison's major interests lay elsewhere. Comparison of ideas, words, and phrases in the

Protestant and in the *Liberator* show conclusively that some of the articles in the *Liberator* were really written by Bourne although attributed to others and that many letters from interested readers were not from readers at all but were written by Bourne who asked questions or suggested subjects which he wanted to discuss.

Before delving into the internal evidence showing Garrison's reliance upon Bourne, it should be disclosed that Bourne himself altered many of his quotations. Indeed the practice seems to have been rather common at that time. Writing in the *Protestant*, April 30, 1830, of his method of quotation, Bourne said:

Remarks are found in some of the papers respecting Editors not designating whence their extracts are made. Our reason for the occasional omission is obvious. We meet with a piece which is too long, or contains matter irrelevant to our purpose—we curtail or alter it to our own taste—Now we think it would be copying our New York Jesuit-Clipper of the Reformer thus to change an article, and then charge it upon the paper in which the original, a totally different essay or narrative appeared. In all other cases it is our practice to render honor to whom honor is due.

A typical example of this is his quotation from Scott's *Commentaries on the Bible* on page 26 of the original edition of *The Book and Slavery* and *infra* 119 where he begins the quotations with Commentary on Deuteronomy 24:7, proceeds with the Note on Exodus 21:16, and ends with Practical Observations on Exodus 21:16 with slight modifications of text in each case. In this instance sentences are taken from each of the Notes or from the Practical Observations on the above Scriptures and combined with a single statement. A second example is Bourne's quotation on page 106 of *The Book and Slavery* and *infra* 173 from Simpson's *Plea for Religion*.¹ He starts with a modified quotation where Simpson is dealing on page 96 with inequality of stipends:

¹ David Simpson, *A Plea for Religion and the Sacred Writings; Addressed to the Disciples of Thomas Paine and to the Wavering Christians of Every Denomination* (Baltimore, 1807).

I know that reflections of this nature are calculated to disoblige those who are interested; but regardless of consequences, without the least dislike of any man living, or the smallest view to any one individual, or a wish to have anything better for myself, and actuated only with a love to truth, and the advancement of our common Christianity, I for one protest in the face of the sun against all such abuses.

He then adopts two phrases used by Simpson on page 361 in speaking of resigning his charge: "I have received no affront; conceived no disgust." Finally he concludes with a garbled version from Simpson's reasons for his conduct from page 354:

I have long and earnestly endeavored to quiet my conscience, and reconcile it to my present situation. I have used every method in my power for this purpose. I have pleaded for the example of others, great men, good men, useful men; I have soothed it . . . 'What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul.'

It must be said, therefore, that no quotation used by Bourne can be accepted as wholly accurate until traced back to its original sources. Bourne's argument was a specious one, but, where a quotation is used by Garrison in the *Liberator* with the same inaccuracies as are found in Bourne, one has incontestable evidence that he lifted it from Bourne's books.

It is also necessary to clarify at this point how easy it was for Garrison to forget his debts, whenever acknowledgement would detract from his growing reputation and his need had lessened. He never mentioned the change in his philosophy induced by *The Book and Slavery*, and both he and his sons in their life of Garrison seem to have gone to great pains to cover up his use of the book and his reliance upon Bourne during the first crucial year of the *Liberator's* publication.

When Bourne died, Garrison said in the *Liberator* on November 28, 1845: "He was one of the earliest, most uncompromising and powerful opponents of slavery in the United States, and deserves to be remembered by posterity with gratitude and honor. We shall endeavor to express our feelings

more fully in the *Liberator* of next week." But it was not until December 26, one month later, that he inserted the statement: "The following pungent extracts are taken from a small volume entitled *The Book (Bible) and Slavery Irreconcilable*, written and published in 1816, in Virginia, by the Rev. George Bourne recently deceased in the City of New York." There follow two columns of extracts, a few from *The Book and Slavery*, the remainder from Bourne's contributions to the *Liberator* in 1833 and thereafter. Garrison continued: "In the year 1833 and for a considerable period subsequently Mr. Bourne was a frequent contributor to the *Liberator*." Back on March 17, 1832, Garrison had been more specific when he printed this statement in the *Liberator*: "Next to the Bible, we are indebted to this work for our views of the system of slavery." Moreover, there is incontestable proof of another sort, important to a correct evaluation of Bourne and what Garrison called his "small volume." Small as it was, Garrison could in all truth have admitted that his first knowledge of Bible texts came from it.

One of the proofs that Garrison relied heavily upon Bourne's book during the first year of the *Liberator* (1831) is found in the paragraph of textual quotations used in the upper left-hand corner of each issue. Garrison called them "Texts on Slavery." These were gathered together at the end of the year and reprinted in the issue of December 24, 1831, but not in the same order as they originally appeared. These quotations by their peculiar omissions, or additions, or spellings show clearly that they were taken by Garrison from Bourne's use of them and not from the publications of their original authors. In fact, they reveal an exhaustive use by Garrison of every part of *The Book and Slavery*. Thirty of the 52 texts, constituting some 60 percent of the textual material contained in the issues of the first year of the *Liberator* are directly from Bourne's own words or from quotations from other authors, lifted from *The Book and Slavery*.

There are two flagrant and revealing misspellings of authors names in these texts. Probably because of the mental agony and tension under which Bourne worked when he published his book, he spelled Thomas Branagan's name "Brannagan."

It would have been an easy error to make in proofreading, but he did it more than once. Garrison lifted two quotations, reprinted them exactly as Bourne had them in his book, and as Bourne had done, misspelled Branagan.² In the second instance Bourne has the following quotation:

If the plague had rewards and promises to bestow, it would find apologists; but in defending the poor and the oppressed, as we must struggle against power, riches and frenzy, we may expect nothing but calumny, injuries and persecutions.

Frapolosarpi

This was taken from Bourne with the exact wording and the exact signature and reprinted in the *Liberator* by Garrison. The only other place this spelling as one word can be found is in Bourne. It was Fra Paoli Sarpi.³ Bourne may have known this, but certainly not Garrison. A third error of this kind by Bourne, copied by Garrison, was the name of Nicholas Snethen which Bourne spelled Snethin.⁴ Snethen had tried in vain to get the Methodist Episcopal Conference in 1800 to refuse church membership to slaveholders. He was prominent enough for Garrison to have known the correct spelling of his name had he been working independently of Bourne's book. Finally, let it be said that two men, of their own volition, would not have found the same quotations from the thousands of pages of these men's writings, many of which were published 40 years before in small editions.

Further evidence bearing upon all of the textual material in the *Liberator* is hardly necessary, but material purportedly taken from David Rice's *Slavery Inconsistent with Justice and Good Policy* is important. If Garrison had any antislavery literature, this famous address in the Kentucky Convention should have been an item, yet he took his quotation from Bourne's book. Rice wrote:

² *Book and Slavery*, 37, 38 (*infra*, 127, 128) and *Liberator*, April 2, July 16, 1831.

³ *Book and Slavery*, 97 (*infra*, 167) and *Liberator*, December 24, 1831. Fra Paoli Sarpi (1552-1623) was a Venetian patriot, scholar, and church reformer.

⁴ *Book and Slavery*, 55 (*infra*, 139) and *Liberator*, December 3, 1831. Rev. Nicholas Snethen (1769-1845).

The owners of such slaves then are licensed robbers, and not the just proprietors of what they claim; freeing them is not depriving them of property, but restoring it to the right owner; it is suffering the unlawful captive to escape. It is not wronging the master, but doing justice to the slave, restoring him to himself.

Bourne has this quotation: "The owners of the slaves are then licensed robbers." Garrison copied it from Bourne omitting "then" and wrote it into the Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society in slightly altered form as his own.⁵ He copied also Bourne's quotation, from Rice exactly as Bourne has it with the words "he is retained in slavery" although "he is" is not in the original.⁶ Finally, we have Bourne's quotation from Rice: "When we plead for slavery, we plead for the disgrace and ruin of our own nature. If we are capable of it, we may hereafter claim kindred with the brutes, and renounce our own superior dignity." Garrison quoted this directly from Bourne because Bourne himself changed Rice's "ever after" to "hereafter" and Garrison followed Bourne instead of Rice.⁷

One of the most curious of all of Garrison's deviations from good form in the area of quotations was as follows. Bourne quoted the famous statement by Charles James Fox:

I shall briefly give my opinion of slavery. I know it to be inhuman; I am certain it is unjust; and no honest man can support a trade founded upon principles of injustice and cruelty. Upon this subject, I neither feel, nor desire to feel, anything like moderation. We are accused of enthusiasm. Are we then Fanatics? Are we Enthusiasts? because we cry, 'do not rob, do not murder.' I have ever considered this business as a most unjust and horrible persecution of our fellow-creatures; and in whatsoever situation I may ever be; as long as I have a voice to speak, this question shall never be at an end.

Garrison reprinted this question as a text but omitted the sentence in the middle: "Upon this subject I neither feel, nor

⁵ *Book and Slavery*, 116 (*infra*, 180) and *Liberator*, August 4, 1831.

⁶ *Book and Slavery*, 117 (*infra*, 181) and *Liberator*, August 27, 1831.

⁷ *Book and Slavery*, 59 (*infra*, 142) and *Liberator*, August 20, 1831.

desire to feel, anything like moderation." Why? Could it be because he had written in his "To the Public" in the first issue of the *Liberator*: "On this subject, I do not wish to think or speak, or write with moderation"? It could be and was, because he did this sort of thing many times.⁸

Turning now more fully to that famous address we find several curiosities. The address "To the Public" reads as follows:

In the month of August, I issued proposals for publishing 'The Liberator' in Washington city; but the enterprise, though hailed in different sections of the country, was palsied by public indifference. Since that time, the removal of the Genius of Universal Emancipation to the Seat of Government has rendered less imperious the establishment of a similar periodical in that quarter.

During my recent tour for the purpose of exciting the minds of the people by a series of discourses on the subject of slavery, every place that I visited gave fresh evidence of the fact, that a greater revolution in public sentiment was to be effected in the free states—and particularly in *New England*—than at the south. I found contempt more bitter, opposition more active, detraction more relentless, prejudice more stubborn, and apathy more frozen, than among slave owners themselves. Of course, there were individual exceptions to the contrary. This state of things afflicted, but did not dishearten me. I determined, at every hazard, to lift up the standard of emancipation in the eyes of the nation, *within sight of Bunker Hill and in the birth place of Liberty*. That standard is now unfurled; and long may it float, unhurt by the spoils of time or the missiles of a desperate foe—yea, till every chain be broken, and every bondsman set free! Let southern oppressors tremble—let their secret abettors tremble—let their northern apologists tremble—let all the enemies of the persecuted blacks tremble.

Then follows Garrison's formal repudiation of his former support of colonization after which he continued:

I am aware, that many object to the severity of my language; but is there not cause for severity? I *will be* as harsh as truth, and as

⁸ *Book and Slavery*, 20 (*infra*, 115) and *Liberator*, January 1, 1831.

uncompromising as justice. On this subject, I do not wish to think, or speak, or write, with moderation. No! No! Tell a man whose house is on fire, to give a moderate alarm; tell him to moderately rescue his wife from the hands of the ravisher; tell the mother to gradually extricate her babe from the fire into which it has fallen;—but urge me not to use moderation in a cause like the present. I am in earnest—I will not equivocate—I will not excuse—I will not retreat a single inch—and *I will be Heard*. The apathy of the people is enough to make every statue leap from its pedestal, and to hasten the resurrection of the dead.

It is pretended, that I am retarding the cause of emancipation by the coarseness of my invective, and the precipitancy of my measures. *The charge is not true*. On this question my influence,—humble as it is,—is felt at this moment to a considerable extent, and shall be felt in coming years—not perniciously, but beneficially—not as a curse, but as a blessing; and posterity will bear testimony that I was right. I desire to thank God, that he enables me to disregard ‘the fear of man which bringeth a snare,’ and to speak his truth in its simplicity and power.

The sentence which first attracts attention is the last sentence: “I desire to thank God, that he enables me to disregard ‘the fear of man which bringeth a snare,’ and to speak his truth in its simplicity and power.” This is in part a quotation from Bourne’s amendment of Proverbs 29:25. Garrison did not know his Bible. “Which” is not in this verse, but is always, many times, over and over again in Bourne’s writings.⁹

Garrison had Bourne’s book and he had the latest issue of Bourne’s *Protestant* when he sat down to write his address. In those issues, certainly lying on Garrison’s desk as he searched about for what to say, we find such expressions as the following:

if thou couldst but witness; that make the genius of liberty droop her head in shame; The public mind is in a state of greatest apathy and indifference; begin to open their eyes, and to arouse from their lethargy in which they have so long slumbered; there is through the country at large a spirit of slumber and indifference; lift up a standard against; enlighten and awaken the public mind; May

⁹ *Book and Slavery*, 12 (*infra*, 110) and *Liberator*, January 1, 1831.

the spirit of the Lord lift up a standard against him; voice of the trumpet; aided by the apathy; you would lift your voice even in tones of thunder, but you would make yourself heard; Causing his voice to be heard from one end of the land to the other; The man whose labors contribute . . . will do more for himself even if his name should never be known to his grateful fellow men; . . . The *Protestant* by some, is considered too violent; I do not think so—there is not a fact or narrative stated that is not true; The Editor of the *Protestant*, in *this state of deep sleep* sounded an alarm in thundering voice; as a friend and faithful Watchman would do, if New-York were on fire and the inhabitants asleep.¹⁰

With all of this at hand, it would have been little more than a sophomoric exercise to produce that famous address "To the Public." Garrison was in a difficult position. He did not know much about slavery first hand. He did not have a library. He had no money. Yet, he was starting a newspaper, admittedly a reform paper with emphasis on slavery. He proceeded to use Bourne's paper, and Bourne's book, and Bourne's press until he had gotten every last possible substance from the lot.

The *Liberator* of February 19, 1831, carried an article under the caption "Our Condition," and signed "A Colored Baltimorean" which was assuredly written by Bourne, by all the tests of language, phraseology, arguments, and Scriptural quotations. The letter, purportedly from a free Negro in Baltimore, is hereafter quoted in part, each quotation followed by phrases from different articles in Bourne's *Protestant* as indicated by volume and page:

Instead of profiting by the many lessons we have had, on frugality and economy, and diligently pursuing that which contributes to the moral, intellectual, and political elevation of our people, too many of us are grasping at insubstantial forms, lavishing our hard earnings upon those glittering bubbles which characterise the giddy and the gay in the higher walks of fashionable life. Treading those fascinating patterns in our present condition is not only imprudent but as it incapacitates us to pursue objects of far greater utility, must necessarily tend to perpetuate our degradation.

¹⁰ *Protestant*, I, 405-413.

fascinating them with mere toys (II, 12); covered with a fascinating garb (II, 13); adapted to fascinate the imagination and engage the senses (I, 405); tend to incapacitate (I, 359).

But we would be understood more particularly, as having reference to our blindness as it regards the influence of the press upon the destinies of our people, especially when that powerful engine is wielded in behalf of our bleeding cause.

An engine of power (I, 232); This tremendous engine (I, 257); Such a tremendous engine . . . wielded at will (I, 359); I earnestly desire that the good cause may abundantly prosper by means of the mighty Engine you are wielding (I, 229).

Were it otherwise, how comes it that our friend Lundy . . . has been obliged for a long series of years to struggle against wind and tide. Why is it that untimely and withering blight was permitted to nip in the bud that promising production of your united effort? Why is it that our warm and intrepid friend Cornish was not sustained in his laudable efforts to meliorate our condition? We are as a body unacquainted with the salutary influence which an uncorrupted, independent press is calculated to exert upon our future destiny.

dare not combat (I, 236); wind and tide (I, 394); mind dismally blighted (I, 359); meliorated its spirit (I, 226); meliorate the condition (I, 257); meliorate their condition (I, 258); melioration of man's social condition (I, 358); its influence is extremely salutary (II, 31); so salutary an influence (I, 410); salutary discipline (I, 268); how salutary (I, 260); purify the press (I, 261); a press truly free by which its salutary issues (I, 411).

Before we have done, permit us to express our surprise at the course pursued by some of our religious presses, in regard to the degraded condition and violated rights of the people of color in the country.

violation of first principles (I, 412); flagrant violations of rights (I, 226); violates those sacred principles (I, 236); a violation of personal rights (II, 195).

They can thunder across the Atlantic against the shocking barbarities of the slave-trade in Africa, they can shout for joy when they hear of the downfall of tyrants and the progress of liberal principles in the Old World; they can commiserate with extreme

sensitiveness the condition of the unfortunates of other climes while they can behold in their own land the degraded condition of their colored contemporaries.

While we . . . send back across the Atlantic our shouts of joy at the triumph of liberty in France, we ourselves are busily engaged in the work of oppression (I, 408); too great a sensitiveness (I, 255); distant climes (I, 258).

But we are sorry to state, there are others with whom we are connected by a double bond of church membership who like the unfeeling priest and Levite after viewing our condition pass by on the other side, where they now stand with folded hands. . . .

we should fold our hands and say (I, 411).

Nay when I reflect that ministers of the gospel can indulge in such cowering tergiversation in relation to one of the greatest evils that ever cursed the globe, or oppose the march of the Redeemers kingdom, I turn with indignation. I feel that my master's cause is dishonored in the very face of infidelity.

vilest who ever desolated the world (I, 262); an unutterable curse to the world (II, 187); promoting the kingdom of the Redeemer (II, 161); nor was he ashamed in the face of the world (I, 224); in the face of the congregation (I, 226); in the face of Satan himself (I, 270); in the face of Reason (II, 121).

The evidence that Bourne wrote this article is overwhelming, but there is one fact connected with it that the historian dare not in honesty overlook. Garrison said in this issue:

Our readers are particularly referred to the communication of 'A Colored Baltimorean' on the preceding page. We are intimately acquainted with the author, and know him to be a man of fine talents and estimable worth. His communications are always perfect for the press, even to a comma. Few white men can drive an abler pen.

Then, in his *Thoughts on African Colonization*, no doubt in preparation at that time, he said:

If excellence of style, a dignified carriage, sound logic, a high and abiding faith, and fervent piety confer credit upon a writer, few have ever better illustrated these traits than 'A Colored Balti-

morean,' or deserved a nobler tribute of praise. He who would be ashamed to acknowledge such a man as his countryman and brother, has yet to learn his own insignificance and what constitutes the majesty of human nature.¹¹

In the first issue of the *Liberator*, January 1, 1831, there was an article under the caption "Correspondence" which Garrison said was an "extract of a letter from one of the most distinguished reformers of the age." This letter probably was solicited by Garrison and certainly was written by Bourne. It says in part:

The cause in which you are engaged will certainly prevail, and so will mine; but when? It is not for us to ask. God will accomplish it in his own time; and perhaps by our means, we ought to be content to be His instruments, without aspiring to direct Him.

Slavery and war will be abolished throughout all Christendom, and the abolition of them depends on public opinion; and public opinion is directed by the pulpit and the press. . . . Unfortunately, many of our ministers are too much under 'the fear of man which brighteth a snare,' and they therefore shun to declare the whole counsel of God.

Just previous to this date, six days in fact, the following appeared in the *Protestant*:

It is not given to man to know by what means or at what time the Almighty will fulfill his promises and accomplish his ultimate purposes in reference to this world (I, 413); that it will ultimately prevail we are not for a moment in doubt (I, 387); public opinion will remedy the power of the press (I, 270); When? In his own time (I, 413).

During the early months of Garrison's publications, one finds on the basis of internal evidence the following articles written

¹¹ William Lloyd Garrison, *Thoughts on African Colonization* (Boston, 1832), II, 57. This article appeared in the *Liberator* seven weeks after its first issue. How could it have been written and sent to Boston in time for publication, and how could Garrison have said "his communications are always perfect for the press, even to a comma," if it was what he pretended it to be?

by Bourne. They are occasionally credited to him, but only on rare occasions:

1. "Correspondence." January 1, 1831.
2. "Our Condition." February 19, 1831. Signed "A Colored Baltimorean"
3. "Instruction of the Blacks." March 4, 1831.
4. "The Bible." April 2, 1831. This is the continuation of an article attributed to Garrison by his sons on page 266 of volume one of their biography.
5. "An Able Reply." June 4, 1831. An anti-colonization argument written in answer to a question, also written by Bourne in an earlier issue. Signed "A Colored Baltimorean."
6. "What Shall be Done?" July 30, 1831.
7. "Letter to the Editor." August 20, 1831.
8. "The Insurrection." September 3, 1831.
9. "A Faithful Appeal." December 3, 1831.
10. "The Liberator and Slavery." January 7, 1832.
11. "The Macon Repertory I." March 3, 1832.
12. "The Macon Repertory II." March 17, 1832.
13. "The Abolition of Slavery." July 21, 1832.
14. "Ecclesiastical Man-Stealing." November 24, 1832.

In addition to these articles, the *Liberator* on September 22, 1832, carried a report headed "Rev. Mr. Bourne's Lectures." This was a commentary on two lectures in Boston: "Abolition of Slavery in the United States" and "Natural Effects of Slavery on Slaveholders." It contains one of the paragraphs later written into the Declaration of Sentiments of the American Anti-Slavery Society with slight modifications:

All the laws which have ever been enacted, or which are now in force, that admit the right or the operation of slavery, are, before God, utterly null and void; being an audacious usurpation of the divine prerogative, a daring infringement on the law of nature, a basic overthrow of the very foundation of the social compact, a complete extinction of all the relations, endearments, and obligations of mankind, and a presumptuous transgression of all the Lord's commands.

It is possible, of course, that the authors may have erred

in one or two cases with regard to Bourne's authorship of articles, but more likely some have been omitted which should rightly be attributed to Bourne. Be that as it may, on March 3, 1832, one finds in the *Liberator* the following compliment: "Mr. Bourne we consider one of the most extraordinary men of the age; for energy of purpose, he resembles Luther—for faithfulness, the apostle Paul—for courage, John Knox—and for zeal, the indefatigable Whitefield."

Very early in 1833 Garrison had decided to go to England. The purpose of his trip and various matters incidental to it in all probability will remain clouded. It is known that his fare to England was paid by Negro and white friends and that his announced reasons for going were far from satisfactory.¹² Whatever his purpose or conduct may have been, he needed information and literature. His reliance on Bourne was running out. But he asked for and got one last favor. He wrote to Bourne that the Board of Managers of the New England Anti-Slavery Society wished him to leave for England by April 1 and inquired if Bourne could arrange to reside in Boston and serve as editor of the *Liberator* during his absence. Garrison expected to be gone at least six months, probably a year. He wanted to know on what terms an arrangement could be made.¹³

Garrison certainly had no money, but negotiations proceeded so rapidly that Bourne agreed two weeks later to provide a weekly essay

to be called The Firebrand against the Ecclesiastical Man Stealers; a weekly essay against the Negro Shippers; one or two short scraps about anything and every thing and a full length editorial article upon any topic which Mr. Johnson and Mr. Knapp may think most suitable against our opponents as the matters may arise.

Bourne objected to "any name being announced as Editor." He had already sent three articles and promised more the following week.¹⁴ So it was that Bourne became the editor

¹² Gilbert H. Barnes, *The Anti-Slavery Impulse, 1830-1844* (New York, 1933), 52-54.

¹³ Garrison to Bourne, March 7, 1833.

¹⁴ Bourne to Garrison, March 20, 1833.

of the *Liberator* for a time without public announcement. Garrison sailed May 2, 1833, and returned to the United States September 29, 1833. His trip was a complete fiasco from the view of his announced purposes to counteract colonization and to raise money for a Negro school, and he was compelled to borrow money to come home; but he had enhanced his reputation among the misinformed, secured a sizeable quantity of British antislavery literature, and made contact with some important people abroad.

Meanwhile, Bourne wrote voluminously for the *Liberator* once more. It is not possible to identify every editorial during Garrison's absence as having been written by Bourne, but the following leading articles present no problem:

1. "Firebrand No. 1, by an Incendiary Fanatic." April 20, 1833. Signed "Onesimus."
2. "Firebrand No. 2." April 27, 1833. Signed "Onesimus."
3. "Firebrand No. 3." May 4, 1833. Signed "Onesimus."
4. "Abstract Enemies to Slavery." May 11, 1833. Signed "Paul."
5. "Colonization Craft." May 18, 1833. Signed "Paul."
6. "The Slave Trade at Richmond." May 18, 1833.
7. "Slave Holder in Botany Bay." May 25, 1833. Signed "Paul."
8. "Onesimus to B. K. Junior." May 25, 1833. Signed "Onesimus."
9. "Firebrand No. 4." June 1, 1833. Signed "Onesimus."
10. "Firebrand No. 5." June 15, 1833. Signed "Onesimus."
11. "Onesimus to Critics." June 29, 1833.
12. "Firebrand No. 6." August 31, 1833.
13. "Compensation for Slaves." August 31, 1833. Signed "Paul."

The question of whether Bourne or Garrison wrote *Thoughts on African Colonization* which was put on sale in Boston on May 31, 1832, will require a great deal more investigation. Garrison wrote in later years of Bourne's "exposure of the hypocrisy of the Colonization Scheme." Bourne wrote to Garrison, March 20, 1833: "Please to bring on with you, or transmit by first safe private conveyance my two orations de-

livered in Boston, as I want to Enounce them here without delay as an antidote to Master Finley's wiles. Do not forget this; it may be of importance to our cause." There are portions of the "Thoughts" which are almost certainly Bourne's, but more evidence is needed.

The more one compares the work of the two men, the greater temptation it is to substitute the name of George Bourne wherever Garrison's is found.

Bourne's close relationship with Garrison lasted for several years as the *Liberator* and the American Anti-slavery Society were started. Bourne joined the Dutch Reformed Church on April 16, 1833, and during the remaining dozen years of his life served three congregations in New York City and edited the *Christian Intelligencer*, the religious periodical of his denomination. Those years were filled with preaching, lecturing, traveling, and writing as his son so well described them:

Mr. Bourne was one of the most indefatigable students and workers of his day. He was scarcely ever without pen and paper, or book, in hand, even at his meals. In addition to the constant demand upon him for matter for his paper, he was incessantly preparing articles for magazines, editing and indexing books; reading, revising, and preparing books for the press, for Harpers, the Appletons, and other publishers. To avoid 'rusting out' he was also lecturing and preaching, Sabbaths and week-days. . . . His general style of speaking was extempore and incisive. He was a fluent speaker, forcible, convincing, eloquent, and at times terrible in his denunciations of the giant evil and inequities of this era. Multitudes thronged to hear him wherever he was announced to speak upon these topics.¹⁵

Bourne was a vital participant in that great movement in human affairs which changed the current of history, a proponent of that great reform which turned human activity into new channels, a proponent of that great truth that the Bible and slavery are indeed irreconcilable until his sudden death at his editorial desk on November 20, 1845.

¹⁵ Theodore Bourne, "George Bourne, the Pioneer of American Antislavery," *Methodist Quarterly Review*, LXIV (January, 1882), 86-87; see also Ray Allen Billington, *Protestant Crusade, 1800-1860* (New York, 1938).

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF THE PUBLICATIONS OF GEORGE BOURNE

It is astonishing to see how few are the books named in most of the lists of Bourne's writings and how scanty and inaccurate are the biographical notes. With the exception of two or three sermons, this is a list of publications which the authors know about and have used. It may not be complete because Bourne worked with restless energy. He also published anonymously and under various pseudonyms. Bourne's son has said, moreover, that his father "edited and republished many of the controversial works of the sixteenth and following centuries." Included in this list are all of Bourne's important religious and antislavery publications.

Bourne, George. *Baltimore Evening Post*, March 25 to November 26, 1805.

[Bourne, George]. *Spirit of the Public Journals; or, Beauties of the American Newspapers for 1805*. Baltimore, Dobbin & Murphy, 1806. 300 pp.

Bourne, George. *The History of Napoleon Bonaparte, Emperor of the French and King of Italy*. Baltimore, Warner & Hanna, 1806. 400 + 16 pp.

Bourne, George. *The Life of the Rev. John Wesley, A.M., with Memoirs of the Wesley Family*. Baltimore, Dobbin & Murphy, 1807. 352 pp.

[Bourne, George]. Armageddon [pseud.]. *Remarks upon a Pamphlet Entitled "An Inquiry into the Validity of Methodist Episcopacy."* Baltimore, Dobbin & Murphy, 1807. 36 pp.

[Bourne, George]. *Case of Baptis Irvine in a Matter of Contempt of Court*. Supplement: *An Essay on Constructive Contempt of Court*. Baltimore, Dobbin & Murphy, 1808. 57 + 48 pp.

Bourne, George. *The Majesty and Condescension of God. A Sermon Delivered at the Opening of the Presbyterian Church in Port Republic on Christmas Day, 1812*. Staunton, Isaac Collett, 1813. 39 pp.

Bourne, George. *The Duty of American Citizens. A Sermon*

- Delivered in Port Republic on the General Fast Day, September 9, 1813.* Harrisonburg, Davidson & Bourne, 1813. 35 pp.
- Bourne, George. *Marriage Indissoluble and Divorce Unscriptural.* Harrisonburg, Davidson & Bourne, 1813. 113 + 64 pp.
- Bourne, George. *The Christian's Companion in His Field and Garden.* Harrisonburg, Davidson and Bourne, 1814.
- Bourne, George. *Prophecy. A Discourse Delivered in Harrisonburg on the Day Appointed for Humiliation and Prayer.* Harrisonburg, Davidson and Bourne, 1814. 39 pp.
- Bourne, George. *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable; with Animadversions upon Dr. Smith's Philosophy.* Philadelphia, J. M. Sanderson & Co., 1816. 141 + 16 pp.
- Bourne, George. *The Virtuous Woman.* Mt. Pleasant, 1820. 15 pp.
- Bourne, George. *Lectures on the Progress and Perfection of the Church of Christ.* Mt. Pleasant, R. W. Knight, 1823, 447 + 72 pp.
- Bourne, George. *Joseph at the Verge of Eternity.* Mt. Pleasant, R. W. Knight, 1823. 19 pp.
- Bourne, George. *Protestant.* New York, 1830-1831. Bourne published and largely wrote this journal and continued to write for the *Protestant Vindicator* which succeeded it. He later left the Presbyterian Church and then edited the *Christian Intelligencer* until his death on November 20, 1845.
- [Bourne, George, ed.] *Secreta Monita Societatis Jesu. Secret Instructions of the Jesuits. Printed verbatim from the London Copy of 1725. To Which is Prefixed an Historical Essay; With an Appendix of Notes, by the Editor of the Protestant.* Princeton, F. J. Simpson, 1831. 232 pp.
- [Bourne, George]. Presbyter [pseud.]. *An Address to the Presbyterian Church, Enforcing the Duty of Excluding All Slaveholders from the "Communion of Saints,"* New York, April 16, 1833. New York, 1833. 16 pp.
- Bourne, George. *Man-Stealing and Slavery Denounced by the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches, Together with an Address to All the Churches.* Boston, Garrison & Knapp, 1834. 19 pp. Reprinted in *Picture of Slavery*, pp. 181-211.
- Bourne, George. *Picture of Slavery in the United States of America.* Middletown, Conn., Edwin Hunt, 1834. 228 pp., including Appendix 1: *Man-stealing and Slavery Denounced by the Presbyterian and Methodist Churches*; Appendix 2: *The Duty*

of *Excluding All Slaveholders from the Communion of Saints*; and Appendix 3: *Declaration of the Anti-Slavery Convention Assembled in Philadelphia, December 4, 1833*.

Second edition. Boston, Isaac Knapp, 1838.

Glasgow Edition. *Picture of Slavery in the United States of America; being a Practical Illustration of Voluntaryism and Republicanism*. Glasgow, University Press, 1835. 188 pp.

[Bourne, George]. *Lorette. The History of Louise, Daughter of a Canadian Nun, Exhibiting the Interior of Female Convents*. New York, C. Small, 1834. 208 pp.

Bourne, George. *The Abrogation of the Seventh Commandment by the American Churches*. New York, David Ruggles, 1835. 23 pp.

Bourne, George. *The Controversy between Protestants and Romanists*. New York, 1835. 23 pp.

[Bourne, George]. *Slavery Illustrated in Its Effects Upon Woman and Domestic Society*. Boston, Isaac Knapp, 1837. 127 pp.

Bourne, George. *Modern Protestant Church Courts Unmasked*. Providence, John E. Brown, New York, John S. Taylor, 1838, 154 pp.

[Bourne, George]. *Illustrations of Popery*. New York, 1838. 540 pp.

Bourne, George and Krebs, John M. "Presbyterians," in I. Daniel Rupp, *He Pasa Ekklesia. An Original History of the Religious Denominations at Present Existing in the United States*. Philadelphia, J. Y. Humphreys, 1844.

[Bourne, George]. *A Condensed Anti-Slavery Bible Argument: By A Citizen of Virginia*. New York, S. W. Benedict, 1845, 91 pp. This was published after Bourne's death in all probability. It is not certain that he wrote the introduction.

Roy, William L. *A Complete Hebrew and English Critical Pronouncing Dictionary on a New and Improved Plan*. New York, Collins, Keese & Co., 1837. 740 pp. To Which is Added: *An English Index of Nearly One Hundred Pages Prepared with Great Care by the Late and Much Lamented Rev. George Bourne of this City*. New York, John F. Trow & Co., 1846. 832 pp.

[Bourne, George]. *The American Text-Book of Popery: Being an authentic compend of the bulls, canons, and decretals of the Roman Hierarchy*. Philadelphia, Griffith and Simon, 1847. 540 pp.

Printed cheaply and in a small edition, *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* has become a rare book. Copies are owned by the Library of Congress, the New York Public Library, the Presbyterian Historical Society, and one of the authors of this volume, John W. Christie. Because it is rare, because it is an important early American antislavery document, and because it is referred to so often by the authors in their study of George Bourne, *The Book and Slavery Irreconcilable* is reprinted on the following pages.

In reprinting Bourne's book, the title page and the page before the title page are reproduced in reverse order from the book printed by J. M. Sanderson and Company of Philadelphia in 1816. A half dozen or so typographical errors have been corrected. The only other changes have been to number footnotes consecutively for each chapter rather than to use the symbols *, †, ‡, §, ||, ¶, **, ††, ‡‡, etc. as was done in the original starting the sequence afresh on each page.

THE
BOOK
AND
SLAVERY
IRRECONCILABLE.
WITH
ANIMADVERSIONS
UPON
DR. SMITH'S PHILOSOPHY.

BY GEORGE BOURNE.

"I wot that through ignorance ye did it, as did also your
rulers; and the times of this ignorance GOD winked at;
but now commandeth all men, every where, to repent."

PETER and PAUL.

PHILADELPHIA:
PRINTED BY J. M. SANDERSON & CO.

.....
1846.

SPIRIT OF THE LORD!

WHO DIDST ANOINT

JESUS

OF NAZARETH,

TO PREACH

DELIVERANCE

TO THE

CAPTIVES.

O, ILLUMINE! O, REGENERATE! BLIND,

CORRUPT OPPRESSORS!

INTRODUCTION

EXAMINE the character of Religious Professors; ask, does consistency prevail? do men believe the word of God? and do they exhibit a conformity between their creed and their actions?

The Mosaic Law declares every Slave holder a THIEF; Paul classes him among the highest criminals; the Presbyterian Confession of Faith asserts, that he is the most guilty of all thieves; the Methodist Discipline avows, that no man can have a sincere desire to "*flee from the wrath to come*," unless he refuses to enslave, buy and sell human flesh; "the supreme law of the land" formally pronounces that his practice is totally "irreconcilable with the principles of justice and humanity"; and the Bills of Rights promulge, that the immunities of man which are indispensable to the possession of life, the acquisition of property, and the enjoyment of happiness, are natural, inherent and inalienable. Therefore, every man who holds Slaves and who pretends to be a Christian or a Republican, is either an incurable Idiot who cannot distinguish good from evil, or an obdurate sinner who resolutely defies every social, moral, and divine requisition. Evangelical charity induces the hope that he is an ignoramus.

"Point to me the man,

Who will not lift his voice against the trade
In human souls and blood, and I pronounce,
That he nor loves his country, nor his God.
Is he a *Christian* then? who holds in bonds
His brethren; cramps the vigour of their minds;
Usurps entire dominion o'er their wills,
Bars from their souls the light of moral day,
The image of the great Eternal Spirit
Obliterating thence? Before your God,
Whose holy eye pervades the secret depths
Of every heart, do you who hold inthrall'd
Your fellow-being's liberty, believe
That you are guiltless of a DAMNING CRIME?
Be undeceived—and cleanse from guilt and blood
Your crimson'd conscience, and polluted hands."¹

¹ *Daniel Bryan.*

But "it is better to be *moderate* in our opposition to Slavery; and not to make too strong an attack upon the Devil." Moderation against sin is an absurdity. Can any man conjoin stealing and honesty, or dare he admonish a headstrong transgressor partially to desist from his ungodly practices? Such sermonizing would be approved by every reprobate.

"They call themselves *moderate men*; but upon this subject, I neither feel, nor desire to feel, any thing like the sentiment of moderation. To talk of moderation upon this matter, reminds me of a passage in Middleton's Cicero. "*To enter a man's house, and kill him, his wife and family, in the night, is certainly a most heinous crime, and deserving of death. But to break open his house, to murder him, his wife, and all his children, in the night, may still be right, provided it is done with moderation.*" This is absurd—and yet it is not so absurd, as to say slavery may be carried on with moderation. For if you cannot break into a single house, if you cannot rob and murder a single man, with moderation; with what moderation can you break up a whole country, can you pillage and destroy a whole nation? Indeed, in an affair of this nature, I do not profess moderation! It is a question of simple justice. Notwithstanding which, they plead that moderation in arranging robbery and murder may be very proper and useful."²

Our timidity is powerfully addressed, by the enumeration of the varied enmity which accompanies the declaration of truth unmutated and unadulterated. No stronger evidence can be obtained, that a man's conscience is guilty and that his heart is corrupt, than when the faithful exposition of the BOOK excites his wrath.³

The denunciations of the sacred volume must not be mitigated: the predominance of vicious tempers and the consequent exhibition of unholy conduct are totally incompatible with the instructions and the example of Jesus of Nazareth and his Apostles; a direct and incessant violation of the eighth commandment cannot be

² *Charles James Fox.*

³ "Reformation must be put at some distance to please. Its greatest favourers love it better in the abstract than in the substance. When any old prejudice of their own, or any interest that they value is touched, they become scrupulous, captious, and every man has his separate exception. Thus between the resistance of power, and the unsystematical process of popularity, the reformer is hissed off the stage, both by friends and foes." *Edmund Burke.*

compounded with the rectitude which Christianity enjoins: the worst of all Thieves is not the most devout Believer: that internal chemistry which extracts the essential qualities of genuine religion, and then combines the *caput mortuum* with constant crime, that it may be palatable to an ignorant or careless conscience, must be opposed: and the complicated enormity of kidnapping, and the hypocrisy which he displays, who while he is a perpetual Thief, wishes to be honoured as a Christian; who while he preaches and rules the Church, steals his neighbour, and dooms his Brother to a wretched and endless servitude:—must in plain Scriptural language be reprobated.

“Ye Gospel-Promulgators! why so dumb
Upon this solemn theme, to which each ray
Of Revelation points? And has the world
Such fascination, such corrupting power,
And vile intimidation’s force, as thus
To paralyze the energies divine
Of Satan’s combatants, that they will yield
To his blood-feasting hosts without one blow?”⁴

These pages are published with no unchristian sensibilities.⁵ But Gospel charity requires not, that we should believe a *lie* to be *truth*, or *injustice* to be *probity*, or that *he who stealeth his brother, makes merchandize of him, sells him or if he be found in his hand, whom the Word of God proclaims to be a Thief, is an honest man and a Christian*. Slavery is condemned; the uprightness of those pretences which Oppressors offer, why they should be considered Christians, is the subject of investigation; and the melioration of the Church and of our Country was both the motive which produced, and the object which was desired by this publication. The contest is for the sacred cause of Truth; and however severe it may be when individualized in its application, the sentiments are in full unison with the Holy Scriptures, and with every honest Man’s unsophisticated convictions; therefore, to temporize would be criminal. “A

⁴ Daniel Bryan.

⁵ The Apostolic admonitions were recollected. *Wherefore, putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another. Be ye angry and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the Devil. Let him that stole, steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands that which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Ephesians 4. 25-29.*

rough truth is better than a smooth falsehood." That delinquent is peculiarly guilty in the judgment of the Book, *who calls evil good, bitter sweet, darkness light*, or who endeavours so to commingle them, that no difference is discernible between the requisitions of Religion and the solicitations of vice; and thus, while men pretend or really desire to fulfill the divine injunctions, they are numbered among the Transgressors.

No desire is felt to propitiate Professing Christians, while they steal "souls and hands." Their guilt against God and Man who hold Slaves in Columbia, is exactly equal with his criminality, who sails to Congo, and kidnaps a cargo of Negroes: and it is altogether a burlesque upon every thing sacred for a *Man-robber* to pretend to Christianity; and far more dishonourable and injurious to the Church, to permit him to preach, and rule in the spiritual affairs of immortals.

Many persons to whom the severest censures apply as Slave-holders, possess other estimable qualities; but can that man be a *Christian* who enslaves his coloured neighbor, who unmercifully whips her, although far advanced in pregnancy, who gives her no comfort of any species for her services, and then sells her with her offspring for an increased price, on account of the children whom he had kidnapped? Such men would immure their *Fellow-citizens* in bondage, and ingulf them in similar misery. He who admits not, that this is the real nature and operation of innate depravity, has never *known the plague of his own heart*, and is not a penitent redeemed sinner.

The most obdurate adherents of Slavery are Preachers of the Gospel and Officers and Members of the church. A son of Belial is easily convinced; he offers no palliative; he denounces, although he perpetuates the evil; but conceiving himself absolved from all moral obligation, he is desirous to participate in the gain as long as it can be grasped: but Christians defend *Negro-stealing*; they marshal the examples of men who lived not under the moral code dispensed by Moses; they misinterpret varied regulations of his law, and thereby transform truth into error, and the dictates of justice into the vilest improbity; they claim the silence of our Lord and his Apostles and Evangelists, as a proof that Slave-holders then were *innocent*; and they affirm that no New Testament command or

denunciation is directed against involuntary servitude.⁶ These *wrest the scriptures unto their own destruction; being led away with the error of the wicked.*⁷ To tolerate Slavery or to join in its practice is an insufferable crime which tarnishes every other good quality. For *whosoever shall keep the law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all:*⁸ and it is duplicate malignity; the word of God is transmuted into indulgence for sin; infidels and worldlings are encouraged to believe that Christianity is a mere deception, when its Expositors and Disciples contend for "injustice and inhumanity" by the Book; what blasphemy! and slavery, with its abettors, is "a mill-stone hanged about the neck" of the church, from which she must be loosened, or she will "be drowned in the depth of the sea."

The flagitious acts concerning Slaves which Christians daily and publicly perpetrate without remorse, are a just subject of animadversion. Repentance, reformation, and restitution are much more suitable for a *Slave-driver*, than the palliation of his guilt, or excuses for his enormous crime; and it is the height of delusion, to suppose him, an "acceptable" Believer, who detains his fellow-man in the most dreadful vassalage. But if the most guilty and daring transgressor be sought, he is a Gospel-Minister, who solemnly avows his belief of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, or of the Methodist Discipline, and notwithstanding himself is a *Negro-Pedlar*, who steals, buys, sells, and keeps his brethren in Slavery, or supports by his taciturnity, or his smooth prophesying, or his direct defence, the Christian Professor who unites in the kidnapping trade. Truth forces the declaration, that every Church Officer or member who is a Slave-holder, records himself by his own creed, a Hypocrite!⁹

Extracts from various writers are incorporated with this disquisition: they illustrate and fortify both the doctrines which are advanced, and the arguments by which they are corroborated. The

⁶ This is the substance of a Sermon which was lately delivered in defence of Slavery. What refined notions of honesty! What joy to Man-stealers! What a triumph for the Devil! Alas!

⁷ 2 Peter 3. 16, 17.

⁸ James 2. 10.

⁹ No discussion of the African Slave-Trade is introduced: that was totally abolished in 1808: and can never be re-established. Hence, it was unnecessary, either to display its enormities, or to oppose its unparalleled abominations.

most enlightened Theologians, Moralists, Civilians, Politicians, and Patriots of all denominations, climates, countries, and languages have uniformly coincided with the BOOK; have expressed similar sentiments upon the impolicy, the injustice, the cruelty, and the anti-Christianity of kidnapping in Africa and American Slavery; and have thus consigned the original contrivers of this infernal machination, and the successive generations of those who have participated in its crimes and unhallowed pelf, to merited ignominy, and execration; universal and everlasting.

No argument is requisite to justify a work, which honestly defends the rights of man, against the arbitrary exactions of inhuman Cainites, and unjust Rehoboamites; which opposes "a licensed system of wholesale robbery and murder," and maintains the eternally paramount claims of equity and mercy; which, by developing the absurdity of all pretensions to *Pure and undefiled Religion* in him whose whole life is a ceaseless rotation of stealing and cruelty, points the path of duty to the upright inquirer, and exonerates the church from the charge of sanctioning "the highest degree of theft"; and which expostulates with those whose diurnal practice is a continual violation of the spirit and letter of the moral law, a flagrant departure from the steps of the Redeemer and his primitive Servants, and an open disgrace to Republicanism and Christianity.

What shall an Expositor of the Truth do? dare he connive at evils which obstruct the prosperity of the church? Though convinced of the absolute impossibility to reconcile the bondage and traffic of men with evangelical philanthropy; shall *he hold his peace*, and refuse to illuminate the ignorance, to remove the prejudices, to combat the injustice, and to expunge the inconsistency of his professing Christian Brethren?

He has calmly weighed the consequences; he has deliberated upon the results; he has foreseen the effect of the plain and earnest declaration of divine Truth; he is convinced, that most persons will become his enemies; he feels the workings of that *fear of man which bringeth a snare*; and he cannot develope the varied agitation with which his heart is conflicted under a review of all the extensive censure which the TRUTH involves; inculcating persons of all stations, characters, and of almost every denomination of Christians, and which declares them participants in "a system of incurable injustice, the complication of every species of iniquity,

the greatest practical evil that ever has afflicted the human race, and the severest and most extensive calamity recorded in the history of the world " ! ¹⁰

But how shall an earnest contender for *the Faith which was once delivered to the Saints*, act? dare he cry PEACE, when God declares *there is no peace*? dare he deliver *smooth things*, when God urges penitence and reform? can he scrutinize this mass of corruption, and not warn his fellow-Christians to *touch not, taste not, handle not*? dare he from dread of offending, disobey the books of which he professed his belief, and to which he promised a conscientious practical conformity? And will he burden his shoulders with the curse of *handling the word of God deceitfully*? will he load his conscience with the conviction, that while men are deceiving themselves, he uses no means to remove their destructive delusions? will he conceal the truth, which unfolds the endless evasions and artifices of sin and Satan to ensnare the soul in perdition everlasting? and dare he deny the evident, undeniably correct interpretation of the word of God, to teach *the perverse disputings of men of corrupt minds, and destitute of the truth, that gain is godliness*.¹¹

Certain repetitions of sentiment and phraseology were designed. It is absolutely indispensable to give the Church, *precept upon precept, line upon line, here a little and there a little, that they may go, and fall backward, and be broken, and snared and taken*.¹² A criticism upon this volume, will not be heard, either from a *Thief, or from him who consents with him*.¹³ The permission would transform a *Flesh-Merchant* into Legislator, Judge, Juryman, Testimony and Delinquent: and his opinion, especially if he be a pretended Believer, will not be even listened to; because a *Kidnapper* or his Defender, is neither a Christian, nor a Presbyterian, nor a Baptist, nor a Methodist, nor a Republican; but a Despot, whose "traffic in slaves is totally irreconcilable with the principles of justice and humanity." ¹⁴

O that this essay may remove the obloquy under which Religion

¹⁰ *William Pitt*.

¹¹ 1 *Timothy* 6. 5.

¹² *Isaiah* 28. 10-13.

¹³ *Psalms* 50. 18.

¹⁴ *Tenth Article of the Treaty with Britain*.

groans, and teach us the just estimate which we should form of a Slaveholder's character! O, that Preachers, Officers, and Members of the Church, may take the alarm, and contemplate the result of their silence and example! O, that Nominal Disciples of Jesus may strive to maintain consistency, that it may no longer be an infidel reproach, "he is a Christian Slave-holder," *alias* Man-stealer! and O, that others may confederate for the contest, and cease not to combat, until LEGION is exterminated from the Temple of God!

—"But hark! whence rolls that thundering peal,
Which shakes astonish'd Mammon's glittering mounds,
And rouses all the fierce and clamorous ire
Of his tyrannic votaries? Lo! begirt
With the impervious mail of martyr'd zeal,
And golden truth, a little phalanx stands,
Upon the Heaven-defended batteries
Of Gospel-Law, and aims the artillery
Of holy eloquence, against the dark,
The massy battlements of tyranny.
Thence tis, that those convulsing thunders break,
Which fire the sons of Avarice with rage.
Persist, ye reverend Veterans! for the cause
In which your hallow'd banner is unfurl'd,
Embraces all that makes existence dear.
Undaunted band of Christian Patriots, hail
May Victory's bays your honour'd temples crown,
And your reward be those delights supreme
Which store the magazines of heavenly bliss—
Whose melodies divine, no human ear
Has known; whose charms unmatch'd, no earthly eye
Has seen; and whose exhaustless excellence,
The mind and heart of man have ne'er conceived." ¹⁵

¹⁵ *Daniel Bryan.*

CHAPTER I.

STATEMENT OF THE SUBJECT.

THE corruption of the human heart, and the deceitfulness which accompanies it are inconceivable. Among the various modes by which they are displayed, *the detention of men in bondage indefinite*, should receive unmitigated execration: and the principles upon which *slave-holding* is defended, with the characters of those who engage in its support, are most melancholy demonstrations of duplicity, and of the promptitude, with which we can be deluded *to change the truth of God into a lie*. Is it not a fact too alarming to be recorded without the utmost dread, and will it not in futurity be deemed almost incredible, that a system which includes horrors ten-fold more than Egyptian servitude is incorporated with most of the *religious*! and civil institutions, which are established in the only land of freedom that exists on the habitable globe? Will subsequent ages credit so monstrous a statement; that Preachers of the Gospel, 1800 years after Angels had sung, *on earth, peace, good-will to men*,¹ were characterized as proverbially devoted participants in all the enormities and iniquity of man-stealing? and nearly 40 years after the promulgation of the Columbian Declaration of Independence reprobated its *self-evident truths*, as unsound propositions, because in practice their covetousness, and their barbarous robbery of the rights of man would have been restrained.

That any persons should have imbibed effrontery sufficient to commence and persist in an infernal trade with the bodies and souls of men, where the illumination of the Gospel determines our duties, responsibility, and destiny, is proof more than ample, of the innate tendency of the human race to every moral obliquity. Admitting that under the reign of Monkish superstition, an absurdity so preposterous might have been tolerated for the sake of exacting

¹ *Luke* 2. 14.

the fees of penance and absolution; what apology shall be patiently heard at the present era, for upholding a traffic which necessarily includes every species of iniquity, and which is the offspring of an unhallowed avarice that conducts to hell?

The cunning and pertinacity with which men, who have not the plea of ignorance to excuse their aberrations maintain and justify their ungodly practices is a most lamentable and irrefragable testimony of the vitiated propensities of the soul. But although, through the lustre of the Holy Scriptures, it is scarcely possible to discover an individual who will calmly palliate the evil nature of those more flagrant transgressions of the moral law, those plebeian violations of decency which are equally debasing and disgusting; yet, they who denounce these crimes and the perpetrators of them in terms of unqualified reprobation, with equal zeal will excuse more fashionable sins, especially if they are menaced with the consequences of their guilt.

The conduct of Religious Professors and rulers loudly demands the severest castigation, and renders the defence of those who adhere to the truth, doubly necessary. It requires more than Christian charity to allow many persons the characteristic of *sincerity*; for the contradiction is so vast, that if the highest interests of the human family were not connected, their discrepancy would excite ridicule: but as man's eternal doom is indissolubly combined with the rectitude of his present practice, the heart is filled with the keenest compassion for that obduracy which rejects truth, for that blindness which transmutes its individualizing qualities, and for that hypocrisy, which to evade scriptural censures, distorts *the book* into a sanction of the vices that it unequivocally condemns.

Human inconsistency and folly cannot be developed in a stronger light, than by a dispassionate review of the multifarious artifices which are adopted to veil the horrors of Slavery, and the evasions by which the charge that they are the most enormous sinners against God and man, is repelled. Had this compound of all corruption no connection with the church of Christ; however deleterious are the effects of it in political society, however necessary is its immediate and total abolition, and however pregnant with danger to the *Union*, is the prolongation of the system; to Legislators and Civilians, the redress of the evil would have been committed. But *Slavery* is the *golden Calf*, which has been elevated among the

Tribes, and before it, the Priests and the Elders and the *nominal* sons of Israel, *eat, drink, rise up to play, worship and sacrifice* ²—there are *Balaams* among us, who prophesy in the name of the Lord, but covet the presents of Balak ³—we have an *Achan* in the camp, whose unsanctified love of money troubles us ⁴—this is *Delilah*, whose fascinations unnerve Samson's arm, despoil him of his locks, and leave him a prey to the Philistines ⁵—this is *Bathsheba*, whose charms have bewitched Christians, until they are involved in impurity and murder ⁶—this is *the idol which the children of Israel have set up in their hearts: the stumbling-block of iniquity which the house of Judah have placed before their faces* ⁷—this covetousness recoins the thirty pieces of silver for which Judas betrayed his Lord ⁸—and this is that *love of the present world*, for which Demas forsook the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship.⁹

The BOOK, the unbiased convictions of every man's conscience, and the natural sensibilities of the heart, establish this doctrine: but Officers and Members of the church have endeavoured to intimidate and silence the promulgers of the truth: while the shameless attempts which have latterly been made, to sustain a system of merciless horrors upon evangelical principles, and by men whose authority will be adduced, and whose example will be imitated by the thoughtless and the covetous, imperiously require the exertions of those who would preserve the character of sincere Christians.¹⁰

“I shall briefly give my opinion of *slavery*. I know it to be inhuman; I am certain it is unjust: and no *honest* man can support a trade founded upon principles of injustice and cruelty. Upon this subject, I neither feel, nor desire to feel, any thing like moderation. We are accused of enthusiasm. Are we then Fanatics? are we Enthusiasts? because we cry, *Do not rob, do not murder!* I have ever

² *Exodus* 32.

³ *Numbers* 22.

⁴ *Joshua* 7.

⁵ *Judges* 16.

⁶ *Samuel* 11.

⁷ *Ezekiel* 14. 3.

⁸ *Matthew* 26. 15-16.

⁹ *Timothy* 4. 10.

¹⁰ The circumstances which produced this volume are subsequently narrated.

considered this business as a most unjust and horrible persecution of our fellow-creatures: and in whatsoever situation I may ever be; as long as I have a voice to speak, *this question shall never be at an end.*¹¹

“ Thus Fox, all-eloquent for freedom stood,
With speech resistless as the voice of blood;
The voice that cries through all the Patriot’s veins,
When at his feet his country groans in chains;
The voice that whispers in the Mother’s breast,
When smiles her infant in his rosy rest:
Of power to bid the storm of passion roll;
Or touch with sweetest tenderness the soul.
He spoke in vain—till with his latest breath,
He broke the spell of Africa in death:
His *dying accents* trembled into air:
*“ Spare injured Africa! the NEGRO SPARE! ”*¹²

That so monstrous an anomaly as man-stealing should ever have existed, almost surpasses credibility: but that Messias’ disciples should be guilty of this highest transgression against human nature, and defend its abominations, never could have been believed, had not all our senses verified the awful fact.¹³

¹¹ Charles James Fox.

¹² Montgomery’s *West Indies*.

¹³ The question was introduced for discussion into the last General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church. A petition upon the propriety of acknowledging Slaveholders as Christian Believers and a reference respecting the religion of *Soul-Merchants* were presented: their proceedings exhibited great indecision, and intimated not hesitation only, but a fear to fulfil their obligations.

During the debate, the uniform conduct of Slaveholders who profess Christianity, was denied as “*misrepresentation*,” notorious facts were contradicted upon the plea of “*exaggeration*,” and an aversion from detaining men in involuntary, unconditional, and interminable servitude and degradation, of the blackest nature, and in the basest degree, was reprobated in the most public manner, as “*the offspring of a turbulent and factious spirit.*”

Yes! It is the *misrepresentation* with which they charged Elijah, when on Mount Carmel, he denounced the Priests of Baal as the soul-destroyers of the Israelites: (1 Kings 18.) it is the *exaggeration* with which the Jews calumniated Jeremiah, when he delivered the tremendous information—that for enslaving their brethren, the LORD *proclaimed liberty to the sword, the pestilence, and the famine.* (Jeremiah 34. 8-20.) It is the *turbulence* which characterized Peter, when he avowed before the Sanhedrim, that *he would obey GOD rather than*

Being decided against any compromise between justice and injustice, Gospel-sincerity and human dissimulation, and opposing this Goliath of iniquity; *the sling and the stone are taken—*

*Who is this uncircumcised PHILISTINE, that he should defy the armies of the living God?*¹⁴

man: (Acts 4. and 5.) it is the factious spirit which was imputed to Stephen, when he declared the truth of the Jewish Council; Ye stiff-necked, and uncircumcised in heart and ears, who do always resist the HOLY-GHOST, as your Fathers did, so do ye: (Acts 7. 51.) it is the world-upside-down-turning disposition, which emboldened Paul, to preach Repentance and the Resurrection of the dead, to the Areopagites: (Acts 17.) it is the turbulence for which they reviled Martin Luther, when he dared to defend the truth, though Rome and her imps had determined to destroy him: it is the factious spirit, by the influence of which, John Knox silenced Mary of Scotland, when he assured her, that there was a vast distinction between an ignorant and an informed conscience, and that her judgment being unenlightened, conducted her into the paths of error and irreligion: and it is that misrepresenting, exaggerating, turbulent and factious spirit, which peopled the Columbian Wilds, rather than surrender to any ecclesiastical tyranny, the rights of man, and the illumination of the BOOK.

O for more "*Misrepresenters*," who have the boldness to display the abominations of *Negro-Tanners*! O for more "*Exaggerators*" who will heap confusion upon *pretended* Christians, by lucidly developing their constant violations of the eighth commandment! O for more *turbulent* and *factious souls*, who will not connive at Officers and Members of the Church, *stealing men*, with impunity, and without censure!

O God, grant us all the exuberance of that spirit which impelled the Reformers, the Martyrs, and Prophets, and the Apostles of JESUS CHRIST! AMEN.

¹⁴ *Samuel* 17. 26.

CHAPTER II.

THE LAW OF GOD AND MAN.

SO abhorrent from our natural sensations is the system of stealing, buying, selling, and enslaving immortal creatures, that it is difficult accurately to delineate this wretched degradation of man. *A Slave is a rational, responsible being, with an abject mind and broken heart; without any will: all whose rights are robbed; whose liberty is despoiled, and whose life is prolonged at the caprice of a tyrant.* No difference is perceptible, between the traffic in human flesh on the coast of Africa or in the interior of America. Every slave in these States is as notoriously *kidnapped*, as if they had been purloined from Guinea: and he who claims a coloured child as his property, and nurtures and detains it in slavery, is equally a *Man-thief*, with the *Negro-stealer* on the Gold-coast.

Those persons who denounce the *African Flesh-Merchant*, and who *seem* to admit, that the imported souls could not have been justifiably captivated, deny that they unrighteously grasp their brethren, and denominate themselves "*innocent Slave-holders*:" but this is *self-confutation*. Can that be *innocence* in the temperate zone which is the *acme of all guilt* near the equator? can that be *honesty* in one meridian of longitude, which at 100 degrees east, is the *climax of injustice*? and would not he, who appropriates to himself, all the children born around him, immediately as they enter the world, *upon the same principles*, make a descent upon Congo, and kidnap a ship load? *No real distinction exists between him, who steals the woman from her husband, the child from its parent, or the whole family, on the eastern or the western shores of the Atlantic, whether for exportation of domestic vassalage.*¹

¹ These identical individuals would rage, if it were attempted thus to exculpate any other *Felon*. *Innocent Horse-Thief* is more consistent language than *innocent Slave-holder*; for the crime of the latter exceeds that of the former, as much as the limited and temporary powers of the animal are sur-

*He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand, he shall surely be put to death.*²

"By this law, every man-stealer, and every receiver of the stolen person, lost his life: whether the latter stole the man himself, or gave money to a *Slave-Captain* or *Negro Dealer* to steal for him. All kidnapping and slave-dealing are prohibited, whether practised by individuals or the state."³

*If a man be found stealing any of his brethren of the children of Israel, and maketh merchandize of him, or selleth him, then that THIEF shall die.*⁴

"Christianity has annihilated that distinction of nations which was once established: every man is now our brother, whatever be his nation, complexion, or creed. How then can the merchandize of men and women be carried on, without transgressing this commandment, or abetting those who do? If a man steal a horse or sheep, he is condemned; but if he steal or purchase of those who steal, hundreds of men and women, he not only escapes with impunity, but grows great by this unnatural commerce! According to the law of God, whoever stole cattle restored four or five fold; whoever stole one human being, though an idiot or an infant, must die. He who stole any one of the human species, in order to make a slave of him, or to sell him for a slave, whether the Thief had actually sold him, or whether he continued in his possession, was punished with death: but if we are *true* Christians, we shall have no occasion for penal statutes to restrain us from stealing or enslaving our brethren of the human species, and *trading the bodies of men.*"⁵

Thou shalt not deliver unto his master, the servant who is escaped from his master unto thee: He shall dwell with thee, even among you, in that place which he shall choose, in one of thy gates where

passed by the extensive capacities and never-ending existence of man. "We know men to whom the truth is become unintelligible, in consequence of the disguise in which they have taken the pains to clothe it; and who have accustomed themselves to palliate vice, till they are incapable of perceiving its turpitude." *Saurin.*

² *Exodus* 21. 16.

³ *Adam Clarke.*

⁴ *Deuteronomy* 24. 7.

⁵ *Scott*

*it liketh him best: thou shalt not oppress him. David said to the Egyptian, canst thou bring me down to this company? and he said, swear unto me by God, that thou wilt neither kill me, nor deliver me into the hands of my master, and I will bring thee down to this company. Take counsel, execute judgment; make thy shadow as the night in the midst of the noonday: hide the outcasts, bewray not him who wandereth. Thou shouldest not have stood in the cross-way, to cut off those who did escape; neither shouldest thou have delivered up those who did remain in the day of distress. As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee: thy reward shall return upon thine own head.*⁶

These scriptures proclaim that *slave-holding* is an abomination in the sight of God: for it justifies the slave in absconding from his Tyrant, and enjoins upon every man to facilitate his escape, and to secure his freedom. Does this injunction comport with a Christian's advertising as a fugitive criminal, a man who has merely fled from his cruel captivity, or with his aiding to trace and seize him who had thus burst from "durance vile"? It is a reiteration of the theft: yet he professes to be influenced by the Gospel! ⁷

But the *Man-stealer* states, that this is injustice, as it destroys his *property*; and that it is base to aid a slave to fly from his chains, or not to assist in recapturing him. Were the master placed in similar misery with the victim of his cruel avarice, and he should escape; rather than be seized, he would slay the assailant; his heroism would be honoured, and his contest for freedom being righteous, he would be exonerated: but if a coloured person should wound a *kidnapper*, he is ignominiously executed, and almost without form: for the trial of Negroes is the highest burlesque upon the administration of justice, that despotism ever devised.

"For tis establish'd by your partial laws,
No slave bears witness in a *white* man's cause,
Beings you deem them of inferior kind,
Denied a human or a thinking mind.
Happy for Negroes were this doctrine true,
Were feelings lost to them, or given to you!"

⁶ *Deuteronomy* 23. 15, 16. *1 Samuel* 30. 10-16. *Isaiah* 16. 3. *Obadiah* 14, 15.

⁷ "Well may we blush when we hear a man boasting of his rights as an American, and of his citizenship among the Saints, with a whip in one hand, a chain in the other, and before him, a Negro flayed from the head to the loins!"

A man cannot assist in seizing a slave, and robbing him again of his liberty or life, when he is inculpable before society, without violating the law of love, and the command of God.

"Slavery! virtue dreads it as her grave:
Patience itself is meanness in a slave.
 Yet if the will and sovereignty of God,
 Bid suffer it awhile, and kiss the rod,
 Wait for the dawning of a brighter day,
 And snap the chain the moment when you may!"

The prophecies are filled with divine denunciations against Judah and Israel, for their *oppression, fraud, rapine, cruelty*, and the varied enormities which originated in their covetousness; and Tyre was destroyed for having *traded the persons of men*.⁸

The gospel censures these sinners with celestial authority. Paul characterizes the Romans who were *Slave-holders*, as *inventors of evil things, without natural affection, implacable, and unmerciful*.⁹

"Among the most corrupt transgressors, he classes *Man-Stealers*.¹⁰ This crime among the Jews exposed the perpetrators of it to capital punishment; and the Apostle classes them with sinners of the first rank. The word he uses, in its original import, comprehends all who are concerned in bringing any of the human race into slavery, or in detaining them in it. Stealers of men are all those, who bring off slaves or freemen, and keep, sell or buy them. "To steal a Freeman is the highest kind of theft."¹¹ In other instances we only steal human property, but when we steal or retain men in slavery, we seize those who in common with ourselves, are constituted by the original grant, Lords of the earth."^{12 13}

"Man-stealers!—The worst of all thieves; in comparison of whom, highway robbers and house-breakers are innocent! What then are traders in Negroes, and procurers of servants for America!"¹⁴

⁸ *Ezekiel* 27. 13.

⁹ *Romans* 1. 30.

¹⁰ *1 Timothy* 1. 10.

¹¹ *Grotius*.

¹² *Presbyterian Confession of Faith*.

¹³ *With this doctrine, as his avowed creed, can a Presbyterian Slave-driver charitably be deemed a sincere Christian?*

¹⁴ *John Wesley*.

"Men-Stealers are inserted among those daring criminals, against whom the law of God directed its awful curses. These kidnapped men to sell them for slaves; and this practice seems inseparable from the other iniquities and oppressions of slavery; nor can a *slave-dealer* keep free from this criminality, if "the receiver be as bad as the thief."¹⁵

"They who make war, for the inhuman purpose of selling the vanquished as slaves, are really men-stealers. And they who encourage that *unchristian* traffic by purchasing the slaves which they know to be thus unjustly acquired are partakers in their crime."¹⁶

The *Lord God who judgeth her*, will effuse his wrath upon Babylon, because *she makes merchandize of Slaves*, the bodies, and souls of men.¹⁷

"To number the *persons of men* with beasts, sheep, and horses, as the stock of a farm, or with bales of goods, as the cargo of a ship, is a most detestable and *antichristian* practice."¹⁸

"Shall Protestants renounce that merchandize of Rome, which consists of *odours, and ointments, and chariots, and purple, and silk and scarlet*, and continue that more scandalous traffic in *slaves and souls of men?*"¹⁹

"In ages to come, it will scarcely meet with credit, that we who boast ourselves of being a free nation, should have been capable of *buying and selling souls*. If there were no other cause, this is enough to bring down the severest of the divine judgments! No political motives whatever can justify this *diabolical* traffic. Such has been the general practice of mankind in every age preceding the introduction of the gospel: and it is the introduction and profession of that gospel, which render the *dealing in slaves so enormously wicked! A Christian buying and selling slaves! A man, who professes that the leading law of his life, is to do as he would be done by, spending his time, and amassing a fortune in buying and selling his fellow-men!*"²⁰

¹⁵ Scott.

¹⁶ Macknight.

¹⁷ Revelation 18. 13.

¹⁸ Scott.

¹⁹ Robinson.

²⁰ Simpson.

Is there not some chosen curse,
Some hidden thunder in the stores of heaven,
Red with uncommon wrath, to blast the man,
Who gains his fortune from *the blood of souls?*" ²¹

The Methodist discipline asserts, that there is "one only condition *previously* required of those who wish admission into these societies, a desire to flee from the wrath to come, and to be saved from their sins." But how shall they evidence that their desire is real and genuine? "By avoiding *evil* of every kind, especially that which is most generally practised: *the buying or selling of men, women, or children, with an intention to enslave them.* Notwithstanding, Methodist Christians engage in this evil: can they, in the exercise of evangelical charity, be pronounced *acceptable members?*

The ancient Jews understood the words in the decalogue, *Thou shalt not steal, of man-stealing*; and thought that the other sorts of thefts were implied in the last precept, *Thou shalt not covet.*²² Under the Mosaic law, *man-stealing* was the only capital robbery; for the theft of property was expiated by ample restitution. But to *enslave a Jew*, was deemed an equal crime with *murder*; and as it virtually involves the same consequences, it insured the same punishment: and it was no subject of inquiry, whether the slave was actually kidnaped by the claimant, or purchased from another; but if it could be manifested, that such a person was detained by him *contrary to the law of God*, no alternative existed, *death was his immediate portion.*

"The system of slavery is justly held unwarrantable; because, by it, persons are involved in the enormous crime of *man-stealing*: and all who are guilty of this sin are ranked amongst the most notorious criminals. All the fraudulent methods that are taken for the purpose of enslaving men must be considered as *man-stealing*: but all the *buyers and holders of slaves* are partakers of the guilt of the *slave-merchant*. They support and encourage his infamous trade; nor can they pretend that their right to buy slaves, is any other or better, than that of the seller. *They are verily guilty in whose hand the slave is found.* No plea can excuse the practice of detaining in slavery the children of those who have been brought

²¹ Cowper.

²² Exodus 20. 15-17.

from Africa; or give a right to sell them, as any other article of property." ²³

"The all-wise Creator of mankind never intended, that one part of the human race should sell for lucre the other. *Trading the persons of men* is altogether repugnant to the doctrines taught by our Lord himself, and to the dictates of the glorious gospel of peace, which preaches universal philanthropy and good will to men. *Paul, with reference to the detestable custom of kidnapping men, for the purpose of carrying them into slavery, classes man-stealing with those crimes which are most detestable in the eye of God,* most pernicious to society, and most deserving of death by the sword of the magistrate. Man-stealing," and all *slave-holding is man-stealing*, "must therefore be considered a gross evil, in every age, and every nation. This practice is a crime of the first magnitude against our neighbour. If he who pilfers another's property, steals a sheep, robs on the high road, or commits a burglary, be considered and treated as a thief, a robber, a pest to society, of what *enormous villainy* must he be guilty, who *kidnaps my honest neighbour, my faithful servant, my dutiful child, or my affectionate wife*, to transport the one or the other to a country entirely unknown, and never thence to return! This outrage on the sacred rights of liberty, of justice and of humanity is greatly enhanced, if that worst of thieves intend, either to treat them himself as the most abject slaves; or to sell them for that cruel and infamous purpose." But it differs not, *whether he steals the parents in Guinea or the children in his own house*, or enslaves them himself, or transfers them to others for that nefarious object. "In either case, and much more when they are united, reason and conscience, the common sentiments and feelings of mankind, will all unite, if not debauched by avarice, or blunted by habit, to approve of Jehovah's law as just. *He that stealeth a man, and selleth him, or if he be found in his hand; he shall surely be put to death.*" ²⁴ Nor is there a man upon earth, not even among those who are grown hoary in the iniquitous trade of kidnapping and man-stealing, or bartering brandy and baubles for human flesh and blood, that would not execrate the character of him, to whose power or

²³ *Brown's Dictionary of the Holy Bible.*

²⁴ *Exodus* 21. 16.

subtlety he had fallen a victim for similar purposes, and that would not pronounce him worthy of death. But if there were no receivers, there would be no thieves; and he who *receives the stolen bodies of men*, ought to be punished with death according to the law of the Lord, because they are *found in his hand*. How insulting to moral justice, and how affronting to common sense, that those persons who would be immured in "the penitentiary, "for secretly purchasing a few shillings' worth of property, knowing it to have been stolen, should have it in their power publicly to buy and sell whole families of "coloured people, "with complete impunity, and without violating any prohibitory law of the land! as if rectitude and robbery were local things: the former losing its respectability, and the latter its turpitude, whenever the liberty and the lives of harmless negroes become the object of avarice!

"The Bible is not in any manner a favourer of the system of enslaving mankind. It forbids nothing to the African, that is equitable in the conduct of the American. It knows no more of a *white man buying and enslaving a black one*, than it does of a *black man buying and enslaving the white*. In its impartial estimate, and under its commanding power, *Pagans and Christians are all on a level*. If the lawfulness of purchasing innocent persons, for the most cruel and degrading slavery, exist among men, it must be a common right and equally possessed by all nations. *All mankind might be taken to the best market for the human species; exposed in the most indecent manner to public sale; handled and examined like so many head of cattle by their purchases; consigned over, with their unborn posterity, to the most cruel slavery, from generation to generation; and for what? Here let humanity blush, mercy weep, and justice be roused into indignation*. As it is impossible to prove that the natural rights of man are not equally sacred in Africa as they are in America; *would the law of this country permit, the trafficker in souls would no more scruple to kidnap, or purchase the son of his next neighbour, than he would the inhabitants of a remote continent or their descendants.*"²⁵

The principles of moral right and wrong are invariable. They are not circumscribed by geographical boundaries, or particular periods of time; but apply to every individual, of all communities,

²⁵ *Wood's Dictionary of the Holy Bible.*

and in every age. Practices condemned among the Israelites, upon the basis of eternal rectitude, never can be justified: and Jewish aberrations from the requisitions of their own heaven promulged law, instead of furnishing us an example to copy, provide a beacon for alarm and instruction.

The public formularies of the United States exhibit the vast contradiction between our doctrine and practice with oracular authority.

"We hold these *truths to be self-evident*—that *all* men are created equal; that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable rights; that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness." ²⁶

"All men are born equally free and independent; all men have certain natural, essential and inherent rights—among which are, the enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing, and protecting property; and in a word, of seeking and obtaining happiness. Among the natural rights some are in their very nature unalienable, because no equivalent can be given or received for them. Of this kind are the *Rights of Conscience*." ²⁷

"All men are born free and equal, and have certain natural, essential and unalienable rights: among which may be reckoned the right of enjoying and defending their lives and liberties; and that of acquiring, possessing, and protecting property; in fine, that of seeking and obtaining their safety and happiness." ²⁸

"All men are born equally free and independent, and have certain inherent and indefeasible rights, among which are those of enjoying and defending life and liberty, of acquiring, possessing and protecting property and reputation, and of pursuing their own happiness." ²⁹

"Through divine goodness, all men have by nature, the rights of worshipping and serving their Creator according to the dictates of their consciences, of enjoying and defending life and liberty, and acquiring and protecting reputation and property, and in general, of attaining objects suitable to their condition, without injury by one to another; and these rights are essential to their welfare." ³⁰

²⁶ *Declaration of Independence.*

²⁷ *New-Hampshire.*

²⁸ *Massachusetts.*

²⁹ *Pennsylvania.*

³⁰ *Delaware.*

"All men are by nature equally free and independent, and have certain inherent rights; of which, when they enter into a state of society, they cannot, by any compact, deprive or divest their posterity; namely the enjoyment of life and liberty, with the means of acquiring and possessing property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety."⁸¹

"All men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, inherent and unalienable rights, among which are the enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety."⁸²

"There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in the said territory, otherwise than in punishment of crimes, whereof the party shall have been duly convicted."⁸³

"All men are born equally free and independent, and have certain natural, unalienable rights, among which are the enjoying and defending life and liberty, acquiring, possessing and protecting property, and pursuing and obtaining happiness and safety. There shall be neither slavery nor involuntary servitude in this state."⁸⁴

Thus saith the BOOK; but the laws which sanction the slavery of Negroes, deny this doctrine, and consequently are a LIE!

How callous must that heart be to all shame! which notwithstanding these *self-evident truths*, can gravely maintain the necessity of protracting slavery, and uphold its horrors by his actual participation: for every liberal mind is thoroughly convinced, of the uprightness and inexpediency of this, the most cruel, detestable and consummately wicked measure that has been ever devised by mercantile avarice, or sanctioned by a sordid, narrow and misguided policy.

"What *hypocrisy and villainy*, to profess that we are *votaries of liberty*, while we encourage or countenance the most *ignoble slavery*.⁸⁵ We cannot form to ourselves an idea of an object more ridiculous, than an *American patriot signing declarations of Independence* with one hand, and with the other, *brandishing his whip over his affrighted slave*.

⁸¹ *Virginia.*

⁸² *Vermont.*

⁸³ *North Western Territory.*

⁸⁴ *Ohio.*

⁸⁵ *Brannagan.*

How awfully deluded must he be, who, wilfully closing his eyes to the splendour of divine illumination, and shielding his soul from all the arrows of conviction, will consider himself Messiah's disciple, though by the Book, his conscience, his own theological and republican creed, and the supreme law of the land, he stands condemned for *injustice and inhumanity*, before the Church and the World. *A cruel man-stealing Christian!*⁸⁶

"These same Slave-holders would wade through seas of the blood of white men, as well as black men, to gratify their despotic propensities if they were not restrained: it is the *fear* not the *love* of either God or man, that restrains them."⁸⁷

As these are the unadulterated truths of the Gospel, how can a follower of the meek and lowly Jesus, be connected with a system which essentially generates such malevolent principles, and such barbarous conduct? Yet Church-Officers display a predominant insensibility to this complicated turpitude. The quintessence of all absurdity is to hear an Oppressor, in the name of him "who touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire," expatiate upon the BOOK delivered to Jesus in Nazareth.⁸⁸

"A person *cannot* be a child of God, and live in the practice of that which his reason, his conscience, and Scripture disallow: and a man must be intellectually blind, not to see that all these faithful monitors absolutely and unequivocally condemn slavery and its abettors."⁸⁹

As *equity and injustice, philanthropy and barbarism, vice and religion, cannot coalesce*; every Officer and Member of the Church, who steals slaves, although he professes to believe and inculcate the evangelic charity which he does not exemplify, is equally culpable with the *Cainite*, who kidnapped their African ancestors.

⁸⁶ We combat not the theft of Negroes on the coast of Africa, and the transportation of them to the United States. The wholesale Man-stealer, like Cain, bears the mark on his Forehead; he is a *fugitive and a vagabond upon the earth*; and the "Christian Broker in the trade of blood," whose wealth is increased, by alienating all social affections, by severing all relative ties, by dissolving all domestic relations, and by transplanting from one state to another these wretched creatures, because they have a different tinge from himself, is the primeval Murderer's own offspring. Examine *his face*, it is the exhibition of every internal passion: *his heart!!*

⁸⁷ *Brannagan.*

⁸⁸ *Luke 4. 16-32.*

⁸⁹ *Brannagan.*

CHAPTER III.

SLAVERY IS IMPIOUS, CRUEL, FALSE AND UNJUST.

THE Slavery of our species combines every base characteristic. When that august period shall have arrived, that the total extinction of this monster shall be celebrated with the triumphs of Christianity—the inscription which will narrate its existence will simply record—*Here lies the enemy of man, whose principles were irreligion, whose dispositions were cruelty, whose language was falsehood, whose conduct was injustice, and whose pretensions were hypocrisy.* An impious, barbarous, and deceitful Thief! Yet this Idol has usurped a prominent station in the temple of God, and silences the voice of those who minister and serve in the Sanctuary—until the *Blind are leading the Blind into the ditch of perdition.*

Slavery is *impious*, for it directly subverts the divine authority. The supremacy of the great Jehovah is denied, and his government of the human family entirely wrested from him by this vile usurpation. Every principle which dignifies, every affection which refines, and every action which adorns, are inseparable from a permanently operative and deeply impressed conviction of our responsibility before God, for the correct improvement of the privileges with which he has enriched us: but all these are extinguished as soon as man is degraded to a brute. No alternative exists; inferiors in wealth and civil stations must be considered as moral agents, or must be classed with the flocks and herds of the field. Hence, slavery involves the most awful consequences, and wretchedness irremediable. It is a wilful disobedience to the commandments of God; and not only exposes the criminal to the wrath of the Judge, but is a most artful and diabolical invention to exclude even the sufferer by this ungodly machination from the celestial regions of bliss.

He who has scrutinized the uniform tendency of involuntary servitude, who examines the unvarying practice of those who in-

gulph the bodies and souls of men in the net of their selfishness and insensibility; and who, with the eye of Christian philanthropy, has investigated the moral character of the servants, knows; that a *Slave-holder* is an *unfeeling despot*, who would overthrow God's jurisdiction.

Very few *Men-Stealers* comparatively, are even *nominal* Christian Believers. How can a person pretend to be a disciple of the crucified Jesus, who hinders his worship and contravenes his commands; in whom all evangelical charity is extinct; and who will neither enter the kingdom of heaven, nor permit those to approach who would crave admission at the gate? The spirit of Christianity and the practices of *Men-thieves* are at total oppugnation; and consequently they exert their energies to counteract the progress of "pure and undefiled religion." By their example and influence, they endeavor to diminish all regard for sacred institutions, to impede the acquisition of all necessary knowledge, and to obstruct their slaves from listening to the admonitions of divine truth.

Christianity promulges liberty to the captive; it depicts all the misery which must necessarily follow an equitable remuneration, if God requites the *Slave-holder*, as he has abused his fellow-man; it inculcates the doctrines of *justice*, which the *Man-stealer* ever violates; of *mercy*, which never regulate his intercourse with others; of *love*, which are swallowed up by an avaricious, dissipated extinction of feeling; and of *religious fear*, which has been exterminated from his heart, by his deliberate rejection of the light to life, and by his obduracy in opposing "the truth as it is in Jesus;" because it condemns his theft and barbarity.

Hence the Sabbath is disregarded, the means of grace are neglected, and the Gospel ceases at all to interest, until the candlestick is removed from its place, and both the Tyrant and the Slave, realizing a marble-hearted indifference, mingle the same profane execrations, exhibit an identical dishonour of God, and manifest an equal insensibility to worlds everlasting. But if the Slave, convinced of the value of his soul, and solicitous to be rescued from the wrath to come, is desirous to receive gospel instruction, it is altogether denied him, or his attendance at the house of prayer is so restricted, that it includes all the qualities of a total prohibition.¹

¹ All those masters who neglect the religious and moral instruction of their

The law of Virginia denominated a variety of meetings by the coloured people, unlawful; but the clause was so indeterminate, that it empowered the Magistrate to decide what assemblies subjected the attendant to fine and punishment. By an act of the year 1804, all night-meetings *upon whatever pretext*, insured the parties, if convicted, a *whipping*: but this act being a direct violation of religious freedom, it was subsequently amended and explained: and a higher stigma upon legislation, if the clause is viewed in connection with the relation which man sustains to the Supreme Creator, can scarcely be traced upon record; except that every law connected with slavery is equally insulting, wicked and absurd. "Nothing in the said act shall prevent the masters or owners of slaves from carrying or permitting his, her or their slave or slaves to go with him, her or them, or with any part of his, her or their white family, to any place whatever for the purpose of religious worship; provided, that such worship be conducted by a regularly ordained or licensed white minister."²

The total obstruction, is not one jot more hostile to the progress of the Gospel, more subversive of every natural right, or more daring in its defiance of Jehovah's supremacy. How men who swear by the Book, to perform their official duties, could enact such regulations for the government of immortal souls, cannot be explained upon any principle, which does not overwhelm them with the utmost disgrace.³

Even those who have a small portion of conscience remaining, display their depravity; for their pride revolts, if the descendants of Africa are seen within the walls of the temple; generally no convenient stations are provided for slaves, that they may hear the truth; and where a man contrives to preserve the forms of domestic worship with the *stealing and trafficking of human flesh*; the victims of his merciless robbery are excluded: and is it a subject of sur-

slaves, add a heavy load of guilt to that already incurred, by their share in this unjust and inhuman traffic. *Wakefield*.

² Revised Code.

³ Planters prevent their negroes from being instructed in a religion which proclaims the equality of all men; all proceeding from a common stock, all participating the benefits of creation, and among whom, with the Father of men, there is no acceptation of persons. Slavery is therefore an outrage upon Christianity. *Robinson*.

prize? How a man *can pray* in his habitation, with a horde of slaves around him, is inexplicable upon any principle of feeling, affection, or Christianity! The unconcern which slave-holding produces in the Tyrants, with respect to the eternal peace of their own children, and the salvation of the wretched objects of their compound avarice and cruelty, evince, that slavery is *impious*, since it tends to exterminate the authority of Jehovah.

This subversion of the divine government necessarily follows from the adoption of the LIE, that *one man can justifiably be so reduced to the command of another, as to have no will but that of his director.*

Man owes to his Creator and Judge duties from the performance of which no terrestrial power can possibly absolve him. Among these are the cultivation of devotional tempers and the fulfilment of Christ's requisitions. The existing relation between the *Slave-driver* and his vassal, proclaims the impracticability of a compliance with his obligations, and consequently, that he who *steals a man or keeps him in his hand*, is a bold usurper of celestial jurisdiction, and a merciless violator of human right, freedom and responsibility. Does not the absolute uncontroled dominion which the Master possesses over his slave, render even the existence of spiritual-mindedness almost impossible; by opposing to a regular use of the means necessary to strengthen a pious disposition, vast obstructions which counterbalance, if not destroy the force of the Saviour's claim, and make his commands nugatory? When the injunction of God and the order of the Slave-tyrant are directly at variance, when the law of heaven and the mandate of the *Negro-Thief* are both compulsory at the same period, to the earthly authority the slave must primarily submit; and when the everlasting welfare of the servant's soul, and to facilitate the sensual gratifications of his barbarous *despot*, are placed in competition, both parties may be condemned by the Most High, but the doubly cruel Voluptuary must not be disappointed.

Slavery is *impious*, because it strikes directly at the paternal government of the adorable Father of mankind, *who made of one blood all the nations upon the face of the earth, and who, having fixed the bounds of their habitations, fills their hearts with food and gladness.*⁴

⁴ *Snethin.* Acts 14, 17. and 17. 26.

Negroes are in all respects, except in regard to life and death, *cattle*. They are bought and sold, fed or kept hungry, clothed or reduced to nakedness, beaten, turned out to the fury of the elements, and torn from their dearest connections, with as little remorse, as if they were beasts of the field.

Their situation is rendered far more miserable than if they were brutes. Their food is so coarse and bad, that nothing but necessity could compel them to eat it; while their labour and their punishments are severe and cruel.⁵

Are slaves taught to read, so that they can peruse the divine records? If one of ten thousand has attained sufficient learning to spell the plainest passage of Christian instruction, is not the labour which attends it, an obstacle to the acquisition of necessary knowledge almost insuperable? But so few of the whole body of the coloured race have arrived even at this stage of illumination, that they are in a great measure incapacitated to comprehend the force of the most homely and common illustrations of the BOOK.⁶

At the commencement of the year 1805, and while the Legislature were influenced by the same spirit which uniformly has directed all their disgraceful proceedings respecting the unfortunate creatures who have been *kidnapped and enslaved*—in an act concerning these *heirs of misery* a clause was inserted particularly relating to *free* coloured children, which demonstrates an unwavering resolution in the civil authorities to impede every possible melioration of the degraded state of these *rational cattle*. "*It shall not be lawful for the overseers of the poor who may hereafter bind out any black or mulatto orphan, to require the master or mistress to teach such orphan, reading, writing or arithmetic.*"⁷ What must be the unavoidable result of this impenetrable ignorance! How highly must the wrath of Heaven be provoked against us, for such flagrant

⁵ Rowland Hill.

⁶ This torturing system has been pursued so far as to prevent the development of the mental faculties. In Virginia, they are not allowed to learn to read. To have been able to read cost a black man his life. He demanded, that the Africans should share the benefits which American liberty promised, and he supported this demand by the BILL OF RIGHTS. The argument was *without reply*. In such cases, where *refutation is impossible*, ALL TYRANNIES having features which resemble each other; the NEGRO suffered on the gallows. Gregoire.

⁷ Revised Code.

dishonour to his name, and such cruel injustice to the objects of his paternal care!

The plea of slavery is not offered; these are *free* children, bereft of all parental affections, the management and control of whose tender years are assumed by the public; and that authority which proffers them its guardian protection and solitudes, grasps them for no other purposé, than to nurture them in remediless degradation. What vile hypocrisy! what unfeeling despotism! what daring impiety! what tremendous national guilt does this corruption involve! We *steal* the Parents; Providence liberates them from servitude; God calls them to his dread bar; their children survive them; and in offering the friendless orphans the tokens of our mercy, we deny them the noblest privilege of man, we refuse them all intellectual expansion, we doom them to disgrace during their mortal pilgrimage, and for their degraded condition alone, *seize* them by some infernal machination, at a subsequent period, as public nuisances: and sell the youth whom we have adopted as part of our family, to domestic task-masters, who *chain* them in interminable vassalage.⁸

With a fatigued body and a dispirited mind, broken with incessant labour, tamed by a constant privation of every comfort, and often lacerated with severity unmingled with mercy, the slave can feel little anxiety to devote any part of that time which is indispensable to rest his wearied and tortured frame, to the care of his soul. How can he be solicitous to mingle with the worship of God in the family where he resides, if devotional forms *are* maintained!

If he can ascertain the meaning of the Bible, or the Hymn, or the petitions to the *throne of grace*, he must perceive that every portion of the exercises condemns the nefarious temper and the barbarous heart which reduced him to bondage; that all which Christianity includes and commands is a contradiction to all that he suffers and that his Master practises; and convinced therefore, that such a profession of religion is delusion or hypocrisy, he begins to consider Christianity itself as nothing more than a form devised by corrupt

⁸ Our Fathers most righteously complained, that George III. made their yoke insupportably grievous; but the *little finger* of some Legislatures is *thicker* than the British Tyrant's *loins*. "He chastised them with *whips*" these REHOBAMITES "*chastise with SCORPIONS.*" (I Kings 12. 1-15.)

men, to conceal their cruel insidious designs and to cloak their malignant actions.

The Lord's day is generally devoted to pursuits, occupations and pleasures so dissonant from the sacred injunction, that the debased servant cannot even enjoy it as relaxation from labour. He has no choice: the filth of the week must be his companion, or the hours must be devoted to necessary ablutions; and thus the opportunities of evangelical instruction are inevitably lost: and can he be ready to attend public worship in due season, the haughty looks and the contemptuous aversion of the Christian *Man-stealers*! who are assembled, are of equal validity with a formal vote of exclusion from the synagogue. Hence the slave absents himself altogether from a fruitless attendance upon the house of prayer; and thus is banished from the enjoyment of that illumination which is indispensable to the soul's peace temporal and everlasting. If the Son of Man by his Spirit graciously maintains the sense and life of godliness in the slave's heart, every thing connected with him constantly counteracts the very exterior appearance, as well as the internal predominance of Religion. The ignorant and profane creatures who are his associates; their bestial mode of life by promiscuous cohabitation; the want of requisite privacy for meditation and prayer; the constant loss of all those means of grace which are necessary and favorable to religious melioration, and the endless disquietude which he must feel, when he endeavors to concatenate a *sincere* profession of the Christian religion, *meekness and philanthropy*, with the turbulent despotism and the unmerciful exhibitions of his Master, all must, if not totally eradicate the love of that which is good, so diminish its influence, that God is robbed of his glory, the Saviour of the affection due to him, religion of its ornament, the church of the services of her members, the world of its *salt and light*, and the soul of the peace which Christianity was revealed to bestow. Hence, as slavery unavoidably extinguishes all religion in those who are made wretched by its sway over them; the jurisdiction which is claimed and exercised, is an impious usurpation of the divine supremacy.

"Slavery is made up of every crime that treachery, cruelty and murder can invent; and *men-stealers* are the very worst of thieves. What an universal uproar it would make in this land if but one poor child were kidnapped from his parents!" and yet this *kid-*

napping is a regular practice among professing Christians! "These are the people whom the Scripture describes as being *past feeling*. The most knavish tricks are practised by these *dealers in human flesh*—and if the slaves think of our general character, they must suppose that Christians are Devils, and that Christianity was forged in Hell. These slave-purchasers talk of a *damaged slave*, as of a *damaged horse*; some want *working-slaves*, and others *breeding slaves*; for the children of slaves are not, according to the law of nature, the property of their parents, but of their owners; and when the planters and their overseers have children by these negroes, instead of regarding the offspring of their vicious passions, they breed up and sell their own children in slavery like others—What a dishonor in us to carry on such an abominable traffic and to attempt to vindicate or even to palliate it, when every principle belonging to it is founded upon *incurable injustice*! Shall we call ourselves Christians or Devils? can a race of Devils art against us worse than we do against them? In art and wickedness, as it relates to our principle and practice, we abundantly exceed. The horrid business of slavery in the whole of its establishment is founded on the "mammon of unrighteousness," on a selfish love of the world; and the result of this infernal traffic is, a regular system of *wholesale licensed thievery and murder*. Instead of supposing the principles of Christianity for a moment allow such a hellish commerce in human blood; directly as we are made by the *power* of the gospel, what we should be by the *letter* of the law, we are blessed with the spirit of universal love.

"We blush with holy shame, that men
Who bear thy sacred name, our God,
Should dare one single man enslave,
Or shed one drop of human blood." *

"The case now lies fully before us; and we have to make our choice, either to join ourselves to these manufacturers of human wo, or to renounce the horrid association. If we adopt the former, let us avow our conduct in its real deformity. Let us not affect to deplore the calamities attendant on slavery; nor let us pretend to execrate the conduct of the *slave-dealer*, the *slave-holder*, or the

* *Rowland Hill.*

slave-driver; but apologize for them as our partners in iniquity: and if we now take our share in the transaction, with as little compunction we should take theirs; unless we can suppose, that we should become virtuous, in proportion as the temptation to vice increased: and then, we should not be destitute of subterfuges to destroy the feelings of our minds and the convictions of our consciences. We are now called upon to redress evils, in comparison with which, all that exist besides, sinks beneath our notice. If we refuse, can *we form the least pretence to a moral character?* If these be deductions from the most obvious principles of reason, justice and humanity; what must be the result if we extend our views to religion? We do not assume a religious profession to diminish the extent, or to weaken the force and obligation of moral duties.—Do we mean to insult the God whom we pretend to worship, by supplicating him to have mercy upon all prisoners and captives, and to defend and provide for the fatherless, widows, and all that are desolate and oppressed? If Christians, after an impartial examination, are satisfied that slavery is a fair and honest, and lawful commerce, they ought to encourage it; and to reprobate this work as an attempt to slander good men, and to injure their *property*, by holding it out to the public as *the produce of robbery and murder*. But if the arguments be valid, will they presume to treat the subject with cool indifference, and continue a criminal practice? However obvious the duty, yet the mind, hardened by habit, admits with difficulty the conviction of guilt; and sanctioned by a common practice, we may commit the grossest violations of duty without remorse. It is therefore, more peculiarly incumbent on us in such situations, to examine our conduct with the utmost suspicion, and to fortify our minds with moral principles, and the sanctions of religion. In proportion as we are under their influence, we shall exert ourselves to remedy their evils, knowing that our example, our admonitions, our influence may produce remote effects, of which we can form no estimate: and which, after having done our duty, must be left to *Him, who governs all things after the counsel of his own will.*" ¹⁰

All those who devise or execute any iniquitous measures, by which men are impeded from honoring God, and from performing

¹⁰ *Brannagan.*

the duties which they owe to him and their own souls in their moral relation to their Creator, are the most contemptuous rebels against his authority: and if they superadd a claim in competition with the command of Jehovah, they exemplify the audacity of Satan, who was hurled to everlasting despair for attempting to dethrone the Sovereign of the Universe. This charge applies to every *Slave-holder*; for services totally incompatible with the devotional exercises of the Believer are invariably, at the most unseasonable hours, and during the day of rest, required of these unfortunate victims of that *Savageness*, which by a most diabolical infatuation, has been combined with Christianity; and which has long exposed the truths of religion to reproach, the sacred cause to ridicule, the solemnities of the House of Prayer to contumely, and the very character of a Believer to suspicion. While therefore, a power is usurped and legalized which enables its possessor to defy the law of God and to obstruct the duties of men; and unqualified submission to every arbitrary, unjust and irreligious mandate cannot be evaded, without the sacrifice of mortal existence; slavery must be the *acme of all impiety*; consequently, it is *impossible* that a *Slave-holder* can be a *sincere Christian*.

Slavery is the climax of cruelty. By it every affection of the soul is exterminated. It severs all natural ties, and separates all social relations. Matrimonial engagements, when it commands, are dissolved; the chain which links parents and children, by its touch, is shivered to atoms; and at its approach, every domestic duty dies. Hearts, animated by the most delicate love, indulge their mutual affection, not for a Father's and Mother's gratulations, but for a *Tyrant's* gain. Brothers and Sisters mingle their fraternal sensibilities, not in futurity to bless each other by reciprocal aid, but to increase their unmitigated torments. Seldom do they reside many years in the same habitation; a transfer is necessary; and it is made not according to family or moral connections, but by the proportionate value in different markets.

What are the pungent feelings and exacerbations of the Slave in every part of his existence! Doomed from the earliest period of youth to toil, with no necessary relaxation, for the gratification of another's inordinate desires; pinched by hunger, bereft of raiment, denied requisite accommodations at night to repose his enervated and emaciated frame; and for the most trifling inadvertency or the

most innocent indulgence, scourged by a cruel and mercenary Task-Master, until his stripes incapacitate him from active duties; impeded from all religious instruction; tortured with every agonizing anticipation; and terrified by the prospect of pain, labour and bereavement, the miseries of which are diminished by no hope of melioration, he travels the pilgrimage of life, forgetful of God, himself, and eternity; until the lacerations of his heart urge him to the crime for which by the sacrifice of his mortal existence, he atones; or combined with a diseased body, he drags out his temporal probation amid the unfeeling complaints of his *Kidnapper*, that he can no longer force him to fulfil the daily Task; the neglect of all around him; and the want of every consolation both internal and external, which might enable him with patience to bear his complicated affliction.

“Slavery or the holding of a fellow-creature and his posterity in perpetual bondage, is a source of all kinds of cruelty; and is a peculiarly unmerciful system. It exposes a man to disgrace, and triumphs in his fall. That slaves are ignorant, barbarous, and unprincipled is the consequence of their condition. Men regard their own interest before the interest of their fellow-creatures; and in despite of all the rights of humanity, have forced them across the ocean, and bound them and their posterity to the severest labour. Immortal souls in slavery! Subjects of the grace of God, and the purchase of the precious blood of Christ, in slavery! Beings capable of all the blessings of civil society, deprived of them all, to administer to the vices and pleasure of others! If this be mercy, what is not? Hail ye sons of Benevolence! will you sing?¹¹

That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me!”

“Take a single slave from the millions, who are now immured in bondage; read in his wo-worn face, a brief and striking history of his misfortunes, of his antecedent subjugation and subsequent degradation; torn from his friends, how wishfully he takes a long, a last, an eager look at his violated wife and screaming children, while the tears trickle down his sable cheeks; he is forced from their embraces, while the atmosphere reverberates with their shrieks

¹¹ *Snethin*.

and groans. When I bring my wife and children in view, and consider what I should suffer were I in his situation, my heart weeps blood. Passing by his accumulated excruciation while under the whip of his task-master, depict him in his smoky hut, after the toils of the day; see the tears begin to flow, when he thinks of his wife, his children and friends; he lifts his eyes to heaven, sighs, and looks at his homely fare, the day's allowance of meal, and bursts into tears. He loaths his daily food, as his bodily anguish and mental despair vanquish his constitution. He is languid and feverish; yet he has no friend, no relative to give him any assistance; again he thinks on his family; but the thought aggravates his malady, and accelerates his end. Exchange conditions with this slave, and thou canst not bear the picture of his death! " ¹²

Persons called Christians and Officers of the Church, buy and sell the *stolen* coloured people, with little or no regard to their wishes or affections. The debased Servants are deprived of needful sustenance, are supplied with little and very insufficient raiment, and possess no suitable conveniences for refreshing rest.—They are unmercifully and in general undeservedly chastised; their health, intellects, religion, morals, peace and comfort all disregarded, except the Despot's interest would be affected by neglecting them: and this diabolical machination cannot exist, without the perpetual exhibition of this malignity by the *Slave-Tyrant*. Does this degradation include no cruelty? Do these privations result from the *pure and undefiled Religion* which Jesus taught his disciples on the mount? Is this that lucid proof of *condescending love to the Brethren* which your Master demands? Is this the justice that the *two commandments on which hang all the Law and the Prophets* inculcate? Is this the *mercy* which the Book enjoins us to display to the wretched, the indigent, and the oppressed? And can that man, whose heart with perennial uniformity evinces the predominance of those principles that produce such consequences, momentarily believe, upon scriptural authority, that he is transformed into the similitude of HIM who was *meek and lowly in heart*: or can he *unfeignedly* affirm, *I know, that I am passed from death unto life, because I love the brethren?* ¹³

¹² *Brannagan.*

¹³ "Thou worlding, who, with a prudence truly infernal, hast the art to give a beautiful tint to the most odious objects; who appearest not to hate thy

*For this thing which it cannot bear, the earth is disquieted. The Gospel of Peace and Mercy preached by him who steals, buys and sells the purchase of Messiah's blood!—Rulers of the Church making merchandize of their brethren's souls!—and Christians trading the persons of men!—Lovers of their own-selves: Covetous; Proud; Fierce; Men of corrupt minds, who resist the truth; Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof—From such turn away.*¹⁴

The Slave-holder's claim is founded on falsehood. So completely have the varied vicious dispositions which attend *man-stealing* blinded the eyes and indurated the hearts of *Flesh-Merchants*, that they converse respecting *slaves as their property*, with as much gravity, as if they were *honestly* acquired, and as if no law had been violated. This infatuation has infected not the open reprobate only, *who neither fears God nor regards man*, but the professed believer in Christianity, thereby demonstrating the evil nature, the hardening, blinding tendency, and the consummate deceitfulness of sin.

He who steals his brethren, and sells them, and makes merchandize of them pleads: that the victim of wrong is legalized property; that the slave is equally a transferable possession with any other acquisition; that he is chargeable with no crime for having invested some of his money in souls and hands; that all the progeny of the creatures whom he originally purchased of right belong to him; and that he violates no rule of equity, no moral principle, and no Christian affection by accumulating wealth through this medium.

On the contrary, we asseverate; that no rational being can, by any transmutation possible, ever become property; that no terrestrial legislators, without the most diabolical impiety, can legalize this claim upon the human family; that to traffic in flesh and blood animated by the reasoning capacities is the greatest practicable indignity which can be offered to men as immortals; that he pur-

neighbour, because thou dost not openly attack him; not to falsify thy promise, because thou hast the art of eluding it; not to oppress thy dependents, because thou knowest how to impose silence on them; *I saw thee*, when thou gavest those secret stabs, when thou didst receive bribes, when thou didst negotiate the blood of the miserable, when thou didst traffic the blood of the oppressed, and didst accumulate these wages of unrighteousness, which cry for vengeance against thee." *Saurin*.

¹⁴ 2 Timothy 3. 2-3.

chased an article, which he knew at the time of the pretended transfer was stolen; that every coloured child born in his house, which he claims and holds as his property is shamelessly kidnapped; and that every principle of justice, decency, order, rectitude and religion, is annulled by this most uprighteous claim and its effects. Notwithstanding, he demands to be recognized as a sincere, consistent Christian! ¹⁵

"In a state of nature, no man has a right to seize upon another, and to compel him by force to labour for his subsistence. But independent communities stand to each other in the very same relation that individuals do in a state of nature; and therefore if the man of greater bodily strength or mental sagacity would have no right to convert his weaker neighbour into personal property, neither can the more powerful and enlightened nation have a right to carry off by force or entice by fraud, the subjects of a weaker and more barbarous community, for the purpose of reducing them to a state of servitude. Hence, the American right to purchase cannot be better than the African right to sell; and no man can offer the shadow of a reason, why one African has a right to sell another. The right cannot be natural; because natural rights are those which a man has to his life, limbs and liberty, to the produce of his personal labour, and to the use in common with others of air, light and water; but these privileges are inalienable. That every man has a natural right or just claim to these things is evident from their being absolutely necessary to enable him to answer the purpose for which he was made a living and rational being. This shews undeniably that the Author of his nature designed that he should have the use of them, and that the man who wantonly deprives him of any one of these is guilty of a breach of the divine law. When

¹⁶ "It is in a high degree unjust and cruel, to reduce one human creature to such an abject state, that he may minister to the ease, luxury or avarice of another? Has not that other the same right to have him reduced to this state, that he may minister to his interest or pleasure? On what is this right founded? Whence was it derived? Did it come from heaven, from earth or from hell? Has the great King of Heaven, given this extraordinary right to white over black men? Where is the charter? In whose hands is it lodged? Thus reducing men, is an indignity, a degradation to our own nature. When we plead for slavery, we plead for the disgrace and ruin of our own nature. If we are capable of it, we may hereafter claim kindred with the brutes, and renounce our own superior dignity." *Rice*.

slaves are brought to Market, no questions are asked about the origin or justice of the vendor's title; but they are placed for life in subjection to a dominion and system of laws, the most merciless and tyrannical that ever were tolerated upon the face of the earth; and the inordinate authority which the laws confer upon the Slaveholder is exercised with the utmost rigour and brutality. The right cannot be adventitious; for adventitious rights are immediately derived from the municipal law, which is the public will of the state. But the state has no just authority to deprive an innocent man of his personal freedom, or of the produce of his own labour; for it is only to secure these, by protecting the weak from the violence of the strong, that states are formed and individuals united under civil government.

"It may perhaps be said, that by patiently submitting to governments which authorise the traffic in human flesh, men virtually give up their personal liberty, and invest their governors with a right to sell them as slaves: but no man can invest another with a right which he possesses not himself: and in a state of nature, where all have equal rights, no individual can submit himself to the absolute disposal of another without being guilty of the greatest crime. From the relation in which men stand to one another as fellow-creatures, and to God as their common Creator, there are duties incumbent upon each peculiar to himself; in the performance of which, he can be guided only by his own reason, which was given him for that very purpose. But he who renounces his personal freedom, and submits unconditionally to the caprice of a master, impiously attempts to set himself free from the obligation of that law which is interwoven with his very being, and chooses a director of his conduct different from that which God has assigned him. A man therefore cannot reduce himself to a state of unconditional servitude, and what he cannot do for himself, he cannot authorize others to do for him, by a tacit or an open consent."¹⁶

These principles result from our situation as rational creatures. Human life is altogether placed out of the controul of any terrestrial power, except in those extreme cases, where for the welfare of the body politic, it is indispensable to extirpate a pest. But the means necessary to preserve that existence, and to execute the varied

¹⁶ *Encyclopedia Britannica.*

duties for which it was originally imparted, are equally requisite to its possessor. Slavery annihilates all. Man is justly subjected to moral law: but *property*, a slave who has no will, cannot be the proper object of rewards and punishments.

“A young woman, in the state of servitude, would not be able to maintain her virtue against the solicitations of a master who should promise her liberty, or a remission of toil, upon her yielding to his desires;” and for such refusal, many chaste females have been most barbarously lacerated, until agony forced a reluctant compliance with the debauched tyrant’s lust. “A slave would not strenuously object to the perpetration of any wickedness to obtain his freedom, or even a diminution of his daily task: indeed those temptations might be thrown in his way, which human nature could not resist, but by means of the most gracious principles; even then he might be scourged into compliance; or his labour might be so increased as to make him, for a little respite eagerly embrace the most nefarious proposal which his master could offer; for being absolute property, there is no earthly tribunal to which he could appeal for justice; and very few slaves support themselves under their trials by the recollection of a future judgment.”¹⁷

Slaves after having thus perpetrated the crimes projected by their despots, have been arraigned upon the charge and evidence of their merciless tyrants, have been feloniously condemned and ignominiously deprived of life; to screen the master from disgrace, and for the sake of the value which is allowed to every individual, for the criminal whom he had previously seduced to violate the law, and then contrived under the sanction of its forms, to *murder*. The legislative act which allows the master an adjudged price for his guilty slave, is the very compound of all unrighteousness.

“Some Slave-holders have been instigated by avarice and other worse principles, to compel the creatures who are so absolutely their dependents, to engage in deeds of darkness too hazardous for themselves. The morality or the immorality of any action and the moral fitness of any state are to be judged by their moral tendency, if the one were universally practised, and the other universally prevalent; and as the natural tendency of absolute domestic slavery among such creatures as men is to throw the most powerful tempta-

¹⁷ *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

tions to vice in the way both of Master and Slave; slavery must be in every instance, inconsistent with the fundamental principles of moral virtue.”¹⁸ “It is the double curse of slavery, to degrade all who are concerned with it doing or suffering; and the slave himself is the *lowest* in the scale of human beings except the Slave-Dealer.”¹⁹

“The Negro, spoil’d of all that nature gave
The free-born man, thus shrunk into a slave,
His passive limbs to measured tasks confined,
Obeys the impulse of another’s mind;
Denied, though sought with tears, the sad relief
That misery loves, the fellowship of grief.
Not for himself he wakes at morning light,
Toils the long day and seeks repose at night;
His rest, his labour, pastime, strength and health,
Are only portions of a master’s wealth;
His love! O name not love, when *Christians* doom,
The fruit of love to slavery from the womb.

“Lives there a savage ruder than the slave?
Cruel as death, insatiate as the grave,
Is he who toils upon the wafting flood,
A Christian Broker in the trade of blood;
Boisterous in speech, in action prompt and bold,
He buys, he sells,—he steals, he kills for gold.

“Lives there a reptile baser than the slave?
Loathsome as death, corrupted as the grave,
See the dull Creole,²⁰ at his pompous board,
Attendant vassals cringing round their Lord;
He stalks abroad; through all his wonted rounds,
The Negro trembles, and the lash resounds.
This is the veriest wretch on nature’s face,
Own’d by no country; spurn’d by every race.
His soul;—has he a soul; whose sensual breast
Of selfish passions is a serpent’s nest?
Whose heart mid scenes of suffering senseless grown,
E’en in his Mother’s lap was chill’d to stone;
Whose torpid soul no social feelings move;
A stranger to the tenderness of love.
His motley harem charms his gloating eye,

¹⁸ *Encyclopedia Britannica*.

¹⁹ *Montgomery*.

²⁰ *Man-thief or Slave-holder*.

Where ebon, brown and olive beauties vie;
His children, sprung alike from sloth and vice,
 Are *born his slaves*, and *loved at market price*;
 Has he a soul?—With his departing breath,
 A form shall hail him at the gates of death,
 The spectre Conscience,—shrieking through the gloom,
 Man, we shall meet again beyond the tomb.”²¹

A human creature is not an article of traffic, for the law of God gives not the absolute disposal of one man's life and freedom to another. What he has not made an object of donation, can never be bestowed by a creature; and as no person can possibly offer any equivalent for a human soul, no purchase could ever be honestly made of a rational being; and of course, he never could be even claimed, much less stolen and transferred without the highest degree of iniquity: for no terrestrial power can possibly legalize that which God has preempторily prohibited.²²

Many persons propagate the notion, that the acts of earthly Law-givers can make any practice legal, however base and corrupt its tendency: upon the validity of this sentiment, the superstructure of “detaining men in slavery” is founded. How does the *love of money* destroy the vision and deaden the sensibilities of those who are delivered over to its sway!

Our civil institutions are professedly established upon their conformity with the word of God: and the fundamental principles of the social compact, as they are declared in the Bills of Rights adopted by the several states, are generally in unison with the decisions of the sacred volume. But all these standard declarations of liberty and justice directly condemn the terrestrial authority which infringes the rights of man, and presuppose, if they do not

²¹ *Montgomery.*

²² “Human legislators should remember, that they act in subordination to the great Ruler of the Universe, that they have no power to take the government out of his hand, or to enact laws contrary to his mandates; that if they attempt it, they cannot make that *right* which he has declared *wrong*; and that they cannot dissolve the allegiance of his subjects and transfer it to themselves and thereby free themselves or the people from their obligations to obey the laws of nature. Legislatures have not this authority; and a thousand laws can never make that *innocent*, which the divine law pronounces *criminal*; or give them a right to that which the divine law forbids them to claim.” *Rice.*

openly avow, our dependence upon God, and the obligation to obey his law, to be paramount to any other claim or relation. The Leaders of the last generation are chargeable with the most consummate hypocrisy. Before the world, they boldly denounced the Tyrant of Great-Britain; that he would force the introduction of Africans into these states, as *slaves*. Having thus solemnly challenged mankind to the contemplation of his unrighteous conduct, whose "insupportable despotism," they forcibly rejected; they authorized the importation of kidnapped Africans during a period of thirty years; the whole union is included in the stigma of having licensed the enormities of this complicated system of moral turpitude, and national infamy, this most iniquitous traffic of "incurable injustice" and barbarity; and a system which afforded ample subject for the display of eloquent invective when applied to a foreign Despot, is still sanctioned by the law of the land, and the avaricious, dissipated propensities of the citizens, although it is directly opposed to truth, decency, virtue, conscience and God.²³

Every ramification of the doctrine, *that one rational creature can become the property of another*, is totally repugnant to the rule of equity, the rights of nature, and the existence of civil society. Terrestrial governments are established for no other purpose, than to execute the divine will, to secure our individual immunities, and to promote the harmony and prosperity of those, whose national affairs they direct. Hence, the atrocious crime for which the men of 1776 declared George III. a tyrant, unworthy to reign over a free people, may be retorted upon themselves, and with the additional obloquy that results from their own censures attached to its perpetration.

Every attempt to palliate this enormity is nugatory. Of all his natural and inalienable privileges, the slave is virtually, if not actually divested; his life is of no value to him for he cannot devote it to any useful purposes; his liberty has altogether flown, for he is incarcerated only in an enlarged prison; and he is defrauded of all ability or capacity or opportunity to pursue the innocent and laudable enjoyments, which Providence may place within his attainment. Whatever may be the legislative decision or permission, with what-

²³ When Columbia opposed the pretensions of England, she declared that all men have the same rights. After having manifested her hatred against tyrants, ought she to have abandoned her principles? *Othello*.

ever impious usurpations those who assented to it may be chargeable, the claim to a fellow-creature as property originated in the vilest depravity of man, is perpetuated by the hard-heartedness and self-delusion of sinners, and cannot be justified by the acts, however formal and numerous of any terrestrial government.

The exhibition of our Brethren and Sisters in a public market for sale and hire; the examination to which they must submit that their condition may be ascertained, and the remarks which they must hear upon their varied capacities, are the greatest insult to decorum, the highest violation of rectitude, and the vilest outrage which can be offered to humanity. Justice frowns upon the obdurate transgressor, who has so far obliterated his senses as to be unable to distinguish rational creatures from Horses and Cows; yet these displays, transfers of human flesh animated by an immortal spirit, professed Christians behold without any pungency of soul; until the beneficence of the Gospel has vanished, and sordid gold becomes the centre of every affection and desire.

Reciprocity is a principle acknowledged by all mankind, incorporated with all our feelings, and adopted in all our intercourse, and when it is equitably and impartially administered, it furnishes a safe ground of conduct in all our relative acts. *As thou hast done, it shall be done unto thee; thy reward shall return upon thine own head.*²⁴ This retaliatory doctrine, demonstrates that the bondage of the human species, must be contradictory to truth and right; because they who are guilty of the highest oppression, would not admit the validity of the claim, were an attempt made to enforce it upon themselves.²⁵

What an intolerable evil! How incredible! How disgraceful! that men in the Land of Liberty and filling official stations under the authority of the BOOK, require to be instructed, that to steal, buy and sell men, women and children is contrary to the

²⁴ *Obadiah*. 15.

²⁵ There is nothing useful but what is just: there is no law of nature which makes one individual dependent on another: and all those laws which reason disavows, have no force. Every person brings with him into the world his title to freedom. Social conventions have circumscribed its use, but its limits ought to be the same for all the members of the community, whatever be their origin, colour or religion (*Le Gente.*). If you have a right to make another man a slave, he has a right to make you a slave (*Rice.*). If we have no right to sell him, no one has a right to purchase him (*Ramsay.*).

Gospel; that to defraud the labourer of his hire, to rob the mind of necessary light and the heart of indispensable melioration, and to doom the human race to labour lasting as their existence, without food, raiment, a habitation, and other necessities to support life and recruit nature exhausted by endless fatigue; are totally incompatible with the precept, *do justly, love mercy, and walk humbly with God*; ²⁶ and that all who engage in this odious and most criminal violation of the eighth commandment, should cease every pretension to Christianity.

Should Providence ever permit the same misery and wrong, in one instance only, to assail us which we have inflicted, the nation would as one man rise to arms. Could a single vessel from the Gold-coast arrive on our shores, with impunity escape, and carry away a hundred families of our white population; the injustice, the enormity, the cruelty and the abomination of the act would be dilated upon, until language had lost the practicability of illustrating the subject, and eloquence itself had ceased to interest. But nearly 200 years was this disgraceful procedure, tolerated and legalized, by successive generations of Columbians;—for a long time they declared that it was against their consent, the practice being enforced by foreign arbitrary power: but their insincerity is apparent; for as soon as Providence enabled them to discard all external jurisdiction, they voluntarily imbued their hands in Negro blood, and voraciously grasped the price of African souls.²⁷

Retaliation! How complete would be the petrification of a feeling heart, to see his wife and daughter in the rude hands of an unfeeling, mercenary debauchee, maintained, as long as convenient, for impure indulgences, and then transferred by the wretch, with the offspring of his illicit intercourse, *his own children*, to another unprincipled Tyrant, from him to receive similar insults, with him to realize the same degradation. You cannot contemplate without horror, the involuntary transportation of your family to Guinea; there to be debased in multiform wretchedness without hope, each member of the family severed from you at an impassable distance,

²⁶ Micah 6. 8.

²⁷ It is not shameful to speak as a philosopher, and to act as a despot; to make fine discourses on slavery, and to annex as a commentary, an actual oppression. The legislative system ought to harmonize with the principles of the government. Does this harmony exist in a constitution reputed free, if slavery is sanctioned by authority? *Pinkney*.

and you obliged to form an unwilling connection with another, that you may generate *rational cattle* like to yourself, for the increase of your Tyrant's wealth.

From this view, you with abhorrence avert your eyes; you shudder at the mention of such detestable atrocity; you declare that every claim upon you, marked by such characteristics, is totally null, because it is founded upon a *lie*; you aver that all the constituted authorities, even all the people of every nation in Africa combined, could never transform this *fiction into verity*, and this *vilest of all thefts into justice*; and you would resentfully complain, that "this mischievous kidnapping, purchase, sale and transfer of me, as if I were a horse or an ox merely for labour, while I am not treated with as much care and kindness as that to which those beasts are accustomed, is the very quintessence of all *infernal brutality*." Your doctrine is irrefutable; it is *self-evident*; it is so true, that it can neither be *denied nor proved*.

Can you, therefore, hold a slave? A *sincere Christian* cannot engage in this malevolent commerce; this compound of all turpitude. A *Preacher of the Gospel* ought not to be patiently listened to even, who eloquently depicts the blessings of that *liberty with which Christ hath made us free*, while he holds his fellow-disciple, him to whom he administers the symbols of a Saviour's redeeming love, in a most dreadful and lacerating bondage. An *officer of the Church* cannot without the most deplorable ignorance of himself, pretend to believe and solemnly engage to inculcate the doctrines of the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, and the Methodist Discipline, who enslaves, purchases, transfers, whips, neglects, starves, and by these accumulated wrongs, probably kills the purchase of Messiah's blood? The *Pulpit is dumb* and the *Lord's Table is polluted*; because Preachers and Lay-Officers need to be taught that the greatest possible violation of the eighth commandment, cannot without the most awful delusion be reconciled with a credible profession of Christianity.

"From what class of persons however low and uneducated, can you find men so generally dull and senseless as to have no feeling to the wretchedness of personal slavery? What arrogance and blasphemy is it to suppose that Providence has not endowed men with equal feelings in all countries! Let us look to the words of our Saviour; let us deeply weigh one of the most splendid doctrines of the Christian dispensation, a doctrine, which served more than

any other to illustrate the unparalleled beauty and grandeur of that most amiable of all religions; a doctrine, before which slavery was forced to fly; and to which doctrine, I attribute the memorable and glorious fact, that soon after the establishment of Christianity in Europe, human slavery was abolished. This doctrine is, *high and low, rich and poor, are equal in the sight of God!* This is a doctrine which requires only to be daily impressed on the heart of man *to extinguish the term of slave*; and accordingly, what all the ancient systems failed to do, Christianity accomplished; and, yet we find in the ancient systems of philosophy, a liberality and views of human rights as perfect as in any theories of the present day. To the pure light which this great doctrine of our Saviour diffused over the heart of man, the abolition of slavery must be ascribed." ²⁸

Let Afric's sons before his image bow,
And weave their palmy garlands for his brow,
Who crown'd the work that Clarkson's zeal began,
And raised the negro to the rights of man.
Fox, call'd to office in an arduous hour,
Employ'd his ebb of life—his span of power,
To hush the storm of nations to repose,
To heal the long afflicted Lybian's woe,
From Christian's brows to wipe the sanguine stain,
And free his country from the curse of Cain." ²⁹

"I rest this question on the ground of Religion and justice. A spirit of fanaticism and bigotry may be fairly urged on my opponents and not on me. Theirs are the very principles on which have been rested the grossest systems of bigotry and superstition that ever disgraced the annals of mankind. On what other principles was it that Mahomet sent forth his Mussulmen to ravage the world? Was it not these that lighted the fires of the inquisition? Have not both of these systems been founded on the notion of your having a right to violate the laws of justice, for the purposes of humanity? Did they not both plead that they were promoting the eternal happiness of mankind; and that their proceedings were therefore to be justified on the dictates of true and enlarged benevolence? But the religion I profess is of another nature; it teaches me first to do justice, and next to love mercy; not that the claims of these two

²⁸ Charles James Fox.

²⁹ Martin Archer Shee.

will ever be really found to be jarring and inconsistent. When you obey the law of God, when you attend to the claims of justice, you will then also best consult and most advance the happiness of mankind. This is true, this is enlarged benevolence; whose seat is the bosom of God, her voice the harmony of the world: all things in heaven and earth do her homage; the very least as feeling her care, the greatest as not exempted from her influence: all with uniform consent, admiring her as the mother of their peace and joy.

Some persons declare without reserve, that religion, and justice, and humanity command the abolition of slavery, but that they must oppose the measure because it is inconsistent with the national interest. What is this but to establish a competition between God and Mammon, and to adjudge the preference to the latter? What but to dethrone the moral Governor of the World, and to fall down and worship the idol of Interest? Come, learn a new code of morality! We have discarded our old prejudices; we have discovered that religion, and justice and humanity, are mere rant and rhapsody. These are principles which Epicurus would have rejected for their impiety, and Machiavel and Borgia would have disclaimed as *too* infamous for avowal, and *too* injurious to the general interests of mankind. If God in his anger would punish us for this formal renunciation of his authority, what severer vengeance could he inflict than our successful propagation of these accursed maxims?

If we determine to surrender ourselves without reserve to the domination of hard, unfeeling avarice; to sell ourselves for gain; let us achieve some clearly profitable villainy, some masterstroke of wickedness: we shall then be justified on our own principles; but slavery incurs the utmost guilt in pursuit of the smallest and most questionable profit, and discredits not your hearts only, but your understandings.

As slavery ought indisputably to be considered a most enormous crime; it is our duty to prohibit and punish, if we cannot effectually annihilate the perpetration of it. I can admit of no compromise when the commands of equity and philanthropy are so imperious. I wash my hands of the blood that will be spilled. I protest against it, as the most flagrant violation of every principle of justice and humanity. I never will desert the cause. In my task it is impossible to tire; it fills my mind with complacency and peace. At night

I lie down with composure, and rise to it in the morning with alacrity. I never will desist from this blessed work." ⁸⁰

Theft is the acquisition of another's goods, without returning him a satisfactory equivalent: but the worst of all robbers is he who steals not the bodies only, but the life and the souls of men; and for this felony, no restitution or remuneration can be made.

Every African introduced into this country was *kidnapped*. They never voluntarily entered a slave-ship; and had they even contracted to sell their personal freedom, and that of their posterity for ever, the contract was *void*; for by no compact, could they alienate their inherent rights. But the theft of the Father and Mother, in a Slave-holder's system of morals, authorizes him to *steal* the son and the daughter, through all generations.

Our horror at the robbery of the Negroes in Congo, is mitigated by the distance at which the villainy is performed; but how can men, who have been *kidnapping* coloured people, from their infancy in America, be so miserably self-deluded, so awfully blinded, as not to know that the highest sin on the Gold-Coast, when perpetrated in Columbia, is vastly aggravated, by the splendid illumination which we enjoy on all religious subjects—how can Christian Professors expose themselves to derision, by *gravely* declaring that Hawkins and his gang were *Negro-Thieves*, 300 years ago on the coast of Africa, but they who have practised his abominations, through all succeeding ages *here*, are *innocent Slave-holders*? How *dare* Expositors of the BOOK attempt to persuade persons who hold Slaves, that the proceeds of *man-stealing* are now transformed into honest acquisitions; that *incurable injustice* on the Windward shore, by a voyage over the ocean, is transmuted into Christian integrity; and that a man who *kidnaps* a Parent is a *Monster of Hell*; but if he *steals* children, he is an *Heir of Heaven*? ⁸¹

⁸⁰ *Wilberforce*.

⁸¹ Every Slave in the Union, has been barbarously stolen: all the *traffic in Slaves* is *irreconcilable with the principles of justice and humanity*; and every *Negro-Dealer*, as *Moses* and the *Supreme law of the land* pronounce, is a *cruel THIEF*.

A man who would buy a stolen horse, when he was privy to the robbery, is innocent, compared with a *Slave-purchaser*; for the former, if convicted, will acknowledge his guilt; but the latter, with his accumulated iniquity, pleads that he is not guilty, while he *kidnaps* his neighbour: and that he abets not theft, by *receiving goods knowing them to be stolen*, though he beheld the *Trader rob the property*.

Slavery is unlawful and unscriptural. A Christian must do unto others, what he would that others should do unto him; but no slave-holder would have others to enslave himself; therefore slavery is contrary to Christianity. *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour;* but slavery works the greatest ill: it is contrary to love.

“You are a professor of Religion; you believe that all mankind are brethren; that God is their Father; that Jesus Christ died for men; that men ought to glorify him in body and spirit; that it is just and merciful to keep the purchase of the blood of Christ in slavery! You are a Professor of Religion; you believe that every man is accountable to God, and that all mankind *must stand before the judgment seat of Christ, to give an account for the deeds done in the body*:—can you answer for the consequences of slavery? Alas! is there no contradiction in this profession? Can reason and conscience reconcile such a scheme? You are a professor of religion; you believe that love to God and all mankind is the true spirit of Christianity; that *this commandment have we from him; that he who loveth God, love his brother also*; and that to detain your fellow-creatures in slavery, is the most excellent way to shew your love to them? Is it love to little children to keep them in ignorance and nakedness, to grow up like the wild ass’ colt, while you are forcing their parents to labour for you and your’s? Is it kindness to women that induces you to trample upon virgin modesty, and all the maternal affections? Is it your love to the American Black-man which gives rise to those institutions which consign him to eternal servitude?

From the womb, the child is doomed to all the horrors of bondage, and its birth excites joy, only because it aggrandizes wealth; for a Tyrant grasps it, notwithstanding a Father’s claim, a Mother’s affection, and in opposition to the command of God, the law of nature, the dictates of equity, and the thunder of conscience. Thus *Professors* act, and seduce their progeny into the ungodly practice. *A Sinner redeemed by grace divine!* A chimera! His portion in JESUS delivered him not from *man-stealing*, and if there were no *Penitentiary*, he would purloin a horse or an estate: and to *steal a beast*, or to *defraud a man of a section of land*, is a *vastly inferior crime*, in the balance of the *Sanctuary*, than to *kidnap, buy, sell, or hold a Slave*.

It is of no importance by what means the Slave was acquired; whether by our own robbery, purchase from the Thief, donation from the primary kidnapper, or from him to whom he was transferred, or by bequest; *the guilt is identical*: if the rational creature, a Slave *be found in our hand*; we are involved in all the criminality of *man-stealing*, and shall not escape the retribution of God, when *in righteousness, the Son of Man shall judge the world*.

You are a Minister of the Gospel; you preach *deliverance to the captives*; peace and salvation to a fallen world through Jesus Christ; you denounce *the wrath of God which is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who hold the truth in unrighteousness*; and yet you hold your fellow-creatures in slavery? *Thou that condemnest others and dost the same thing thyself, thinkest thou that thou shalt escape the judgment of God?* You are a Minister of the Gospel; you are engaged to recommend the religion of the meek and lowly Jesus, both by precept and example—does slavery give mankind the highest idea of the excellency of religion?

Ah! where is glorying now? What advantage hath the Christian Slave-holder over the Sceptic Philosopher, the Jew, the Turk, or the Pagan? *What reward have ye? what do ye more than others? do not even the Publicans, all the nations, the same?*

Slavery is the source of all kinds of injustice; for it is incompatible with equity and civil rights, and is the greatest of all tyrannies. The monarchies and aristocracies which have been so often decried by politicians, as oppressive and violent, are *independence*, in comparison of that bondage, in which the American Black-man is kept. It exterminates the rights of women and children; for it is a mere state of barbarism, in which neither the delicacy and chastity of sex, nor the debility and ignorance of children, are regarded. All the physical and commercial distinctions of labour and property are destroyed by it; for slavery is a monopoly, which takes from another what one has no right to claim, and withholds that which belongs to him." ⁸²

What conformity with the moral code, does a *Flesh-dealer* exhibit? *Thou shalt not kill*: slavery in its most benign form, is slow-paced murder. *Thou shalt not steal*: this law, in the comprehension of the Israelites, solely prohibits *man-theft, detaining persons in perpetual bondage*. *Thou shalt not bear false witness against thy neighbour*: no man can possess a slave, until he has *virtually sworn*, that men, women and children are brutes. *Thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's house, thou shalt not covet thy neighbour's wife, nor his man-servant, nor his maid-servant, nor his ox, nor his ass, nor any thing which is thy neighbour's*; ⁸³ the

⁸² *Snethin.*

⁸³ *Exodus 20. 13-17.*

Slave-holder not only sinfully desires, but actually steals them, with his neighbour also; thus consummating his guilt by the most daring rebellion and transcendent depravity.

Every dictate of God's word is flagrantly disobeyed; for reciprocal equity is banished, as soon as slavery appears. *Thou shalt not defraud thy neighbour, nor rob him:* this unceasing cheating and robbery commence when the child first breathes, and ends only at his death.³⁴ *Thou shalt not oppress him who is poor and needy, lest he cry against thee unto the Lord, and it be a sin unto thee;* is stealing a man, and giving him no necessities, *oppression?*³⁵ *Thou shalt neither vex a stranger, nor oppress him;* they kidnap the Stranger, to chain him in endless vexations and calamities.³⁶ *Behold, the hire of the labourers who have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back of fraud, crieth: and the cries of them who have reaped are entered into the ears of the Lord of Sabaoth:* the Slave-Tyrant's reapers are never paid.³⁷ *Ye shall not afflict any widow or fatherless:* the incessantly afflictive experience of coloured females and orphans, neither eloquence can display, nor imagination comprehend.³⁸ *I will come near to you to judgment; and I will be a swift witness against false-swearers, and against those who oppress the hireling in his wages, the widow, and the fatherless, and who turn aside the stranger from his right, and fear not me, saith the Lord of Hosts;* with this menace, the Slave-holder, according to his morality, has no connection; for a slave is not a hireling, and being a brute, can neither be a widow nor fatherless, and he cannot be a stranger turned aside from his rights, he never possessed *one*, and he was born on the plantation: but the *Man-Thief* may recollect, that his *false-swearing* affords him the only basis for these excuses.³⁹ *In the midst of thee, have they dealt by oppression, with the stranger:* is it oppression or Christianity, to kidnap men, and ceaselessly torment them, until they die.⁴⁰ *Rob not the poor, because he is poor; nor oppress the afflicted in the*

³⁴ *Leviticus* 19. 13.

³⁵ *Deuteronomy* 24. 14, 15.

³⁶ *Exodus* 22. 21.

³⁷ *James* 5. 4.

³⁸ *Exodus* 22. 22.

³⁹ *Malachi* 3. 5.

⁴⁰ *Ezekiel* 22. 7.

gate; for the Lord will plead their cause, and spoil the soul of those who spoiled them: are slaves rich? is not oppression daily added to their distresses? has a Slave-holder the fear of God before his eyes? does he anticipate remuneration, with the measure that he meted misery? ⁴¹ *Loose the bands of wickedness, undo the heavy burdens, let the oppressed go free, take away the yoke:* if the Lord had commanded *Flesh-Merchants* to act precisely contrary, how exactly would they have complied! They bind the bands of wickedness, they aggravate the heavy burdens, they incarcerate the oppressed, they increase every yoke, they starve the hungry, they banish the poor, they pillage the naked, they despise their brethren, they condemn the African, they converse in lies, and they multiply the afflictions of the wretched. Yet they have the impudent hypocrisy to pretend that they are Messias' Disciples! ^{42 43}

From the dawning of life until aged decrepitude, barbarity, and injustice, are the Slave's uniform portion; his existence is abbreviated, and dissolution is his only comfort. His terrestrial pilgrimage is toil and pain; his corse is interred without sympathy; no Christian

⁴¹ *Proverbs* 22. 22, 23.

⁴² *Isaiah* 58. 6, 7, 9, 10.

⁴³ But the hiring of slaves involves the sin of stealing them, as it is an encouragement for the kidnapper to repeat his crime: and the payment of the Labourer as well as the Master will not exonerate any man from a participation in the guilt. He aids the *Man-thief*; for he supports another who defrauds his neighbour, who robs him of his wages, and who thereby perpetuates his oppressions.

The Renter of Slaves is generally more rigid and severe even than the kidnapper himself: for the latter shews them, the kindness which is indispensable to promote his interest, and thus in some measure and at certain intervals admits one cheering ray into the gloom: but the Hirer's sole study is to ascertain by what process he can drive the poor creatures so as to procure from them, during the period of possession, for their death he is not responsible, the utmost quantum of labour, at the least practicable expence. Although he retains no slaves as the produce of his own theft, he unites with a *Man-Merchant*, pays him for his iniquity, and joins to defraud the poor of his recompense, and to augment the agonies of the miserable. Some other cause, and not religion or conscience hinders him from *Negro-stealing*; and he who rents a slave, is partaker of his crime who stole him, and can make no juster pretensions to the character of a Christian than the *Kidnapper* himself: for he hates instruction, and casts the words of God behind him; when he sees a thief, then he consents with him; he gives his mouth to evil, and his tongue frames deceit (*Psalms* 50. 17-19.). Therefore he is a wicked sinner.

recollections mingle around the grave which entombs the sleeping dust: he lived in scorn, his death excites no regret but the loss of gain, and he is deposited in oblivion, until the morning of the resurrection.⁴⁴

Notwithstanding all the political evils in our country combined are trifling, when contrasted with the social mischief which slavery diffuses; and although its compound iniquity far exceeds any other sin against God and our neighbour that we can possibly practise: for it is a most audacious rebellion and falsehood against Jehovah; it is impious disobedience to the Saviour, and it is cruelty, pollution, and improbity towards man; yet Preachers, Church-Officers and Christian Professors either participate in these enormities or palliate them to disguise their horrors, or by their silence connive at the perpetrators, and by acknowledging them as Messias' disciples, sanction their ungodly transactions.

Many transgressions incompatible with the *dicta* of the BOOK, may be upbraided with all apostolic fervor: but if a Preacher desirous that *he may be pure from the blood of all men, shuns not to declare the whole counsel of God*; introduces *Negro-stealing*, within the walls of the temple; the reproaches, the contempt, the hatred, the persecution and the menaces which overwhelm him, evince that Slavery is a *Legion of Devils*. *O Jesus, Son of the most High God, send them into the swine!*

⁴⁴ *To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to this word, it is because they have no light in them.*

Isaiah 5. 20, 23. Isaiah 1. 4. Isaiah 10. 1, 2. Isaiah 5. 8. Ezekiel 22. 12, 13. Jeremiah 22. 13 (*This single text might convince any Christian of the iniquity of Slave-holding.* Garretson.), 17. Isaiah 59. 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 13, 14, 15. Luke 11. 46, 52. Joel 3. 6-8. Jeremiah 5. 26, 27. Isaiah 56. 11. Jeremiah 5. 30, 31. Isaiah 29. 13. Amos 1. 6, 9-11. and 2. 6, 7, 12, and 4. 1-5, 12. and 8. 4-6. Zechariah 7. 8, 10. and 8. 16, 17. Jeremiah 7. 4-6, 8-11. Jeremiah 6. 13-15. Ezekiel 22. 23-31. Isaiah 1, 11, 12-20, 23, 28.

The delineation of Jewish *Man-stealers*, 2500 years since, is a most graphical portraiture of Christian *Negro-Pedlars!* and it might be presumed, that these prophetic narrations of the iniquity which existed among the children of Israel, with the denunciations that accompany them, were recorded for imitation and an encouragement to duty, rather than for admonition and an impediment to crime.

The serious Inquirer for *Truth*, ought to peruse most attentively every Scripture which is alluded to or cited. Scott, in his Commentary, boldly affirms, lucidly explains, and irrefragably demonstrates our doctrine.

It is impossible to amalgamate a system which boldly aims to overthrow the jurisdiction of Heaven, with due submission to Jehovah's authority, or to prove him who joins in such audacity, the humble docile follower of the Lamb;—much less can the quintessence of cruelty be combined with the beneficence of the BOOK, or a man void of all sensibility be animated with Apostolic love; equally inefficient would be every attempt, to connect the perennial impudent falsehoods of slavery, with the unimpeachable uniform veracity of divine Revelation, or to demonstrate that an unvarying Falsifier is an *acceptable Disciple of the heart-searching God, who desires truth in the inward parts*;—and not less preposterous would be the endeavour, to cement the continual unrighteous impositions of *Man-stealing* with the constant unbounded rectitude of heart, lip, and life, of body, soul, and spirit, which the Gospel demands, or to evince that *the same mind is in him which was also in Christ Jesus*, and that Paul's integrity directed the malign proceedings of an *impenitent, ceaseless, cruel Thief!*

That Man-stealers can possibly declare before the Church, that they believe the Presbyterian Confession of Faith, and the Methodist Discipline; that they can venture to preach concerning justice, mercy, and pardon upon evangelical principles; that they can unblushingly presume to serve at the Table of the Lord; or that they can calmly seat themselves around the sacred board—is a manifest demonstration of that obduracy of heart, which sin naturally engenders, and of that blindness of vision, which nothing but the Holy Spirit's energy can practicably remove.

Our life past may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles: now it is high time to awake out of sleep, to discard this iniquity, to repent, and to reform this atrocity; or we may fearfully anticipate that, He who holdeth the seven stars in his right hand, who walketh in the midst of the seven golden candlesticks, will come unto us quickly, and will remove our candlestick out of his place, except we repent; that he will lay his ax unto the root of the tree, hew it down, and cast it into the fire: and that He whose fan is in his hand, will thoroughly purge his floor and gather his wheat into the garner; but he will burn up the chaff with unquenchable fire.

Ye shall know them by their fruits. Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? Even so every good tree bringeth forth

good fruit; but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit. A good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit. Every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down, and cast into the fire. Wherefore by their fruits ye shall know them. The fruit is a destruction of every devotional temper, the tree is daring impiety: the tree is incessant cruelty, the fruit is unparalleled insensibility to human wo; the tree is invariable deception, the fruit is unintermitted falsehood; and the fruits are every diversified unrighteousness, the tree is uninterrupted injustice: therefore, as all the fruits are atrociously and detestably corrupt, the tree itself must be incorrigibly rotten.

As no participant in this complicated enormity can possibly be innocent of the guilt which it comprises; every Slave-holding Professor, is either so wretchedly besotted by the influence of sin as to be wilfully ignorant of the true nature and requisitions of the Gospel, or he has assumed a profession of Christianity as a cloak for his malignant and ungodly conduct; hence, whether he be perversely deluded, or a contumacious deceiver, unless he manifest a sincere contrition, by immediately desisting from all concern with a combination of impiety, barbarism, falsehood and dishonesty, he ought *de facto*, to be excommunicated from the Church of God.

CHAPTER IV.

SLAVERY INCOMPATIBLE WITH THE GOSPEL.

SLAVERY is adverse to all the principles and requisitions which the Scriptures reveal. The purchase, or sale, or vassalage, or involuntary hire of men or women destroys the rights which are granted to the human family by the God of Nature; extinguishes all capacity for the fulfilment of terrestrial duties and a compliance with divine injunctions; nullifies the evangelic law of love and equity; and is unequivocally denounced by the Holy Bible, as the highest degree of criminality connected with this temporal state of probation.

“The holder of Slaves supposes, that no other rights belong to them than those of natural life, with the food and raiment necessary to their subsistence. But scripture and reason concur in teaching us that various other rights belong to them. It cannot be denied that the labour of a grown person under any proper direction, is of far more value than so much food and raiment as are necessary to his subsistence; and that he is, therefore, entitled, to more than these as his wages. Whoever denies him this right violates the law and exposes himself to the curse of God. *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal: knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven.*¹ The children of a slave have the same right to receive a religious education from him, which the children of any other person have to receive that benefit from their parent, who is bound to *bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*² Every person as a rational creature, has a right to be exempted from the ordinary engagements of his secular business, during the time which he ought to employ in the public and private exercises of God’s worship. When a master pretends to have the power of keeping one whom he calls his slave from a due attend-

¹ Colossians 4. 1.

² Ephesians 6. 4.

ance on God in his ordinances, he blasphemously assumes the power of robbing God. He is chargeable with the crime of Pharoah, in refusing to let Lsrael go, and serve the Lord. Negroes have the same right with others, to be freed from restraints that are unnecessary to any good end, or in matters of mere indifference, in which the word of God has left men free. Such privileges may be sometimes allowed to slaves by way of special indulgence; but their claim to them as their just right, is not admitted by the system of slavery which now exists; and the enjoyment of some of them is evidently incompatible with the system.³

"All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. It is a golden rule which ought to be constantly in the minds of all men; it recommends itself to every man's reason and conscience, as completely wise and good. Every one implicitly appeals to it as worthy of the highest regard, when his own rights are violated by his neighbour; nor must the slave-merchants be considered as insensible to the excellence of this moral precept, when their own persons, families or interests are concerned. Nay, would not the indignation and anguish of the Slave-Merchant himself be almost inexpressible, were his affectionate wife and dutiful children stolen from his bosom, and sold as slaves for the remainder of their lives; and surely if any man upon earth deserves to be so treated, it must be who has made it his business to *trade in the persons of men*,⁴ and to enslave his innocent fellow-creatures. But if the Sovereign Lord of all regard the cry of the prisoner, the voice of the captive, the lamentation of human misery; if he avenge the blood of his servants so cruelly tortured and murdered, by the hard-hearted task-masters appointed over them; and if he say, *O earth, cover not thou their blood.*"⁵

"The unreasonableness of perpetual unconditional slavery may easily be inferred from the righteous and benevolent doctrines and duties taught in the New Testament. It is contrary to that excellent precept laid down by the divine Author of the Christian institution, *Whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so to them.* A precept so finely calculated to teach the duties

³ *Brown's Dictionary of the Holy Bible.*

⁴ *Ezekiel 27. 13*

⁵ *Wood's Dictionary of the Holy Bible.*

of justice, to enforce their obligation and induce the mind to obedience, that nothing can excel it. No man, when he views the hardships, the sufferings, the excessive labours, the unreasonable chastisements, the separation between husbands and wives, between parents and children, can say, were I in their place, I should be contented; I so far approve this usage, as to believe the law that subjects me to it, to be perfectly right: that I and my posterity should be denied the protection of law, and be exposed to suffer all these calamities; though I never forfeited my freedom, nor merited such treatment, more than others. No; there is an honest *Something* in our breasts which bears testimony against this as unreasonable and wicked. I find it in my own breast, through all the changes of time, the influence of custom, the arts of sophistry, and the fascination of interest. It is a law of my nature; a law of more ancient date than any act of parliament and which no legislature can ever repeal. It is a law inscribed on every human heart; and may there be seen in legible characters, unless it is blotted by vice, or the eye of the mind blinded by interest. Should I do any thing to countenance this evil, I should fight against my own heart; should I not use my influence to annihilate it, my own conscience would condemn me."

"Slavery naturally tends to destroy all sense of justice and equity. It puffs up the mind with pride; teaches youth a habit of looking down upon their fellow creatures with contempt, esteeming them as Dogs or Devils, and imagining themselves beings of superior dignity and importance, to whom all are indebted. This banishes the idea, and unqualifies the mind for the practice of common justice. If I have all my days, been accustomed to live at the expence of a black man, without making him any compensation, or considering myself at all in his debt, I cannot think it any great crime to live at the expence of a white man. If I rob a black man without guilt, I shall contract no great guilt by robbing a white man. If I have been accustomed to think a black man was made for me, I may easily take it into my head to think so of a white man. If I have no sense of obligation to do justice to a black man, I can have little to do justice to a white man. In this case, the tinge of our skins, or the place of our nativity, can make but little difference. If I am in principle a friend to slavery, I cannot, to be consistent, think it any crime to rob my country of its property and freedom, whenever my interest calls, and I find it in my power. If I make any difference here, it must be owing to a vicious educa-

tion, the force of prejudice, or pride of heart. If in principle a friend to slavery, I cannot feel myself obliged to pay the debt due my neighbour. If I can wrong him of all his possessions, and avoid the law, all is well." ⁶

"The holding of Negroes in perpetual slavery is inconsistent with the honour and brotherly love, which Christians acknowledge to be due to all men. *Honour all men. The Lord make you to increase and abound in love to one another and to all men.*" ⁷ We are to love and honour all men as partakers of the same human nature, as descended from the same original parent. *God hath made of one blood all nations, and hath determined the bounds of their habitations.* Also as having immortal souls capable of saving grace, capable of being members of Christ and temples of the Holy Ghost. But the slavery, in which the negroes are now detained, indicates hatred and contempt, instead of honour and love; while it is invidiously restricted to those of a certain country and complexion; it deprives them of several of the common rights of man; and exhibits them to be bought and sold like beasts.

"The evil consequences which have constantly attended the slavery of Negroes, are sufficient to make every Christian abhor it. It is shocking to relate the many instances, disgraceful to human nature, of the dreadful punishment inflicted on these miserable captives for slight offences, of the excessive labour to which they are compelled, of the scanty and unwholesome allotment that is given them of the necessaries of life, and of other sorts of cruel treatment. The education of slaves in the principles of our holy Religion, is almost universally neglected. Hence, especially where they are numerous, they are grossly ignorant of religion and openly immoral in their practice. Thus a race of heathens or infidels is propagated; whose example and conversation must be an infectious and destructive plague to the rest of the inhabitants of the land. Nor is there any reasonable prospect of the reformation of Negroes in a state of slavery; for the masters are generally possessed with a notion, that Negroes are unteachable, and that knowledge would render them more intractable; and the negroes are naturally prejudiced against the instructions of their oppressors." ⁸

⁶ Rice.

⁷ 1 Peter 2. 17. 1 Thessalonians 3. 12.

⁸ Brown's Dictionary of the Bible.

"Liberty conducts to every thing that is sublime in genius and virtue, while slavery extinguishes all. What sentiments of dignity or of respect, can those mortals have for themselves, who are considered as cattle, and who are often staked, by their masters, at cards or billiards, against barrels of rice or other merchandize. What can individuals perform when degraded below the condition of brutes, overwrought, covered with rags, famished by hunger, and for the slightest fault torn by the bloody whip of an Overseer? Slavery supposes all the crimes of tyranny, and commonly engenders all its vices; virtue can hardly thrive among men who have no consideration, who are soured by misfortune, dragged into corruption by the example of crimes, driven from all honourable or supportable ranks in society, deprived of religious and moral instruction, placed in a situation where it is impossible to acquire knowledge, or struggling against obstacles which oppose the developement of their faculties. In their place, perhaps, we should have been less virtuous, than the virtuous among them, and more vicious than their worst characters; for their vices are the work of the nations called Christian." *

"Where is the charter found to sanctify
Despotic, base, unqualified controul,
O'er *strength and will*, by man enthroned o'er Man?
In Revelation's code you find it not,
Nor in Creation's multifarious laws.
The will of Heaven, when unreveal'd by Christ,
Or by the sacred organs of his word,
Is sought and found in the primeval light,
Which Nature sheds through her expanded spheres.
But when with Gospel-day this light combines,
The FOOL who doubts, who asks for clearer proof,
Must hood-wink'd be indeed, and darkness love.
That such resistless evidence obtains,
To evince Demoniack Slavery's turpitude,
With all the powers of brightest Truth appears,
To the impartial mind that views each source;
Whence the full streams of testimony flow.
Each text of sacred Writ enjoining love,
Affection, justice, mercy, meekness, peace;

* *Gregoire.*

And piety establishes this truth,
That *Slavery contravenes the law of God!*¹⁰

Revealed religion is predicated upon the natural equality, the individual responsibility, the reciprocal duties of the human family, and the paramount claims of the most high God to the services, and the obedience of all his creatures. Slavery does not merely diminish the energy, and mitigate the obligation of the sacred scriptures, but it totally nullifies all the fundamental principles of Christianity.

Paul assured the Areopagites, that *God made of one flesh, all nations of men.*¹¹ The dissimilarity of the rational species, upon the pretext of colour, is consequently a chimera; and if the members of the various countries of the globe are derived from a different origin, they cannot be bound by the same laws as ourselves. This aggravates the iniquity of Slave-holding to an inconceivable degree, because it pre-supposes the right to grasp every reasonable creature who bears not our own external conformation, or whose features differ: but the same principles in re-action would justify every country in enslaving its neighbours, and every individual, who could effect it, in stealing his inferior or dependent.

"A slave is a free moral agent legally deprived of free agency, and obliged to act according to the will of another free agent of the same species; and yet he is accountable to his Creator for the use which he makes of his own free agency. When a man, though he can exist independent of another, cannot act independent of him, his agency must depend upon the will of that other; and therefore he is deprived of his own free agency: and yet, as a free agent, he is accountable to his Maker for all the deeds done in the body. This comes to pass through a great omission and inconsistency in the legislature. They ought farther to have enacted, in order to have been consistent, that the slave should not have been accountable for any of his actions; but that his master should have answered for him in all things, here and hereafter. That a slave has the capacities of a free moral agent will be allowed by all. That he is deprived of the exercise of these powers, evidently appears from his situation. That he is accountable to his Maker for his conduct, will

¹⁰ *Daniel Bryan.*

¹¹ Acts 17. 24-26.

be allowed by those, who do not believe that human legislatures are omnipotent, and can free men from this allegiance and subjection to the King of Heaven." ¹²

Slavery is the legitimate offspring, and the frequent cause of a rejection of the BOOK. Christian Instructors may justly be alarmed; they cannot be *silent* upon *man-stealing*, much less excuse, defend, or engage in it, without a virtual admission that divine revelation is not our sole infallible directory. ¹³

Men calumniate the coloured people, that they may claim a right to enslave them; and for justification of their culpable conduct. The accusers are both judges and executioners.

"A thousand times have they tortured the sacred writings, to find an apology for slavery, although the scriptures declare, that all are children of the same heavenly Father: all mortals are sprung from the same family; religion admits of no distinction. In the church, the poor man raises his humiliated form, and the rich regard him with respect; ¹⁴ there the auditors are reminded of their primitive equality, before a God *who is no respecter of persons*; and there the heavenly oracle proclaims, that we ought to *do to others that which we wish to be done to us*. The christian religion alone places the weak under the protection of the strong; and consoles the unhappy, whatever be their country, their colour or religion. The parable of the Samaritan imprints on slave-holders the seal of reprobation; and is an anathema against every person who excludes from the circle of his charity a single individual of the human race. ¹⁵ History attests, that the friends of despotism and impiety are always the defenders of slavery and irreligion." ¹⁶

Slavery extinguishes all the rights of man: from his equal rank in creation, the slave is ignominiously debased to a *brute*; and the immunities which naturally inhere to him, are all stolen. The Thief becomes a despot, and the kidnapped immortal is buried in

¹² *Rice.*

¹³ "If the plague had rewards and pensions to bestow, it would find apologists; but in defending the poor and the oppressed, as we must struggle against power, riches and frenzy, we may expect nothing but calumny, injuries and persecutions." *Frapolosarpi.*

¹⁴ *Paley.*

¹⁵ *Luke* 10, 25-37.

¹⁶ *Gregoire.*

terrestrial vassalage, without hope and without end. His life is at the disposal of a barbarian, who may render it as wretched as he will uncontrouled, or shorten its duration by every refinement of torture: of his freedom he is altogether divested; and his labour, his comforts, his children, and his all, are the *property* of the most guilty violator of the eighth commandment. What peculiarly daring effrontery do men display, when they assume the garb of religion, and deny its most obvious principles, its most luminous prescriptions, and its most tremendous denunciations. Can he be a Christian who abrogates the BOOK?

“The principles of conjugal love and fidelity in the breast of a virtuous pair, of natural affection in parents, and a sense of duty in children, are inscribed there by the finger of God; they are the laws of heaven: but an enslaving law directly opposes them, and virtually forbids obedience. The relations of husband and wife, of parent and child, are formed by divine authority and founded on the laws of nature. But it is in the power of a cruel master, and of a needy creditor, to break those tender connections, and for ever to separate those dearest relatives. This is ever done at the call of interest or humour. The poor sufferers may expostulate; they may plead; may plead with tears; their hearts may break; but all in vain. The laws of nature are violated, the tender ties are dissolved. a final separation takes place, and the duties of these relations can no longer be performed, nor their comforts enjoyed. Would these slaves perform the duties of husbands and wives, parents and children; the law disables them, it puts it altogether out of their power. In these cases, it is evident that the laws of nature, or the laws of man are wrong, and which, none is at a loss to judge. The divine law says, *whom God joins together, let no man put asunder*. The law of man says to the master of the slave, though the divine law has joined them together, you may put them asunder when you please. The divine law says, *train up a child in the way he should go*; the law of man says, you shall not train up your child, but as your master thinks proper. The divine law says, *honour your father and mother, and obey them in all things*; but the law of man says, honour and obey your master in all things, and your parents just as far as he shall direct you. Should a master command his slave to steal, and he should presume to disobey, he is liable to suffer every extremity of punishment, short of death or

amputation, from the hand of his master; at the same time he is liable to a punishment equally or more severe, if he obey. He is bound by law, to do that if his master pleases, for which the law condemns him to death.

"A slave, being a free moral agent, and an accountable creature, is a subject capable of religion and morality; but deprived by law of the means of instruction in the doctrines and duties of morality, any further than his master pleases. It is in the power of the master to deprive him of all the means of religious and moral instruction, either in private or in public. Masters actually exercise this power, and restrain their slaves from the means of instruction, by the terror of the lash. Slaves have not opportunity, at their own disposal, for instructing conversation; it is put out of their power to learn to read; and their masters restrain them from other means of information. Masters designedly keep their slaves in ignorance, lest they should become too knowing to answer their selfish purposes; and too wise to rest easy in their degraded situation. In this case, the law operates so as to answer an end directly opposed to the proper end of all law. It is pointed against every thing dear to them; against the principal end of their existence. It supports in a land of religious liberty, the severest persecutions; and may operate so as totally to rob multitudes of their religious privileges and the rights of conscience.

"A slave is bound to spend his life in the service of another, to whom he owes nothing, is under no obligation; who is not legally bound to find him victuals, clothes, medicines, or any other means of preservation, support, or comfort. A slave is bound to spend his life in the service of his master, and he is not indebted to his master, is under no obligations to him. How can he possibly be indebted to him, who deprives him of liberty, property, and every thing dear to a human creature? All he receives is the bare means of subsistence; and this not bestowed until he has earned it; and then not in proportion to his labour; nor out of regard to him, but for selfish purposes. This bare support the master is not bound by law to give; but is left to be guided by his own interest or humour; and hence the poor slave often falls short of what is necessary for the comfortable support of the body. The master is the enemy of the slave; he has made open war against him, and is daily carrying it on by unremitted efforts. Can any one imagine,

that the slave is indebted to his master, and bound to serve him? Whence can the obligation arise? What is it founded upon? What is my duty to an enemy, that is carrying on war against me? In some circumstances, it is the duty of the slave to serve; but it is a duty he owes himself, and not his master.

The master inflicts upon him, all the punishment the human body is capable of bearing; and the law supports him in it: if he does but spare his life and limbs, he dare not complain, none can hear and relieve him, he has no redress under heaven. When we consider these things, it must appear *unjust to the last degree*, to force a fellow creature, into this wretched situation; and confine him and his posterity in this bottomless gulf of wretchedness for ever. Where is the sympathy, where the tender feelings of humanity? Where is the heart that melts not at this scene of woe? Who is not fired with indignation, to see such injustice and cruelty countenanced by civilized nations, and supported by the sanction of the law? ¹⁷

If holy resentment is excited at the support given to such criminality by national regulations, what Christian commiserates not those, who defend this villainy, and who *consent* with a *Man-stealer*, by acknowledging him an acceptable believer; thus transforming the eternal reprobation which God has affixed upon slavery into a ratification of their ungodliness. Are not these ecclesiastical Officers, *blind watchmen, shepherds who cannot understand, looking to their own way, every one for his gain from his own NEGRO quarter?* ¹⁸ Did all the Preachers faithfully delineate this iniquity, and the curse which attends it, slavery would immediately expire.

As individuals, we are accountable to God for all our actions; but by denying to our fellow creatures, the use of their reason, the acquisition of knowledge, and the exercise of their powers, we interpose a claim between the Creator and man, equally insulting to Jehovah, disgraceful to the church, and injurious to our neighbour. By refusing him requisite instruction, we extinguish his capacity, and by chaining his will, we preclude his obedience to the divine commands. Ere long eternity opens to our incredulous eyes; *the Lord of the servants cometh, and reckoneth with them*; the Kidnapper and his Slave, the Legislator and the Preacher stand before

¹⁷ *Rice.*

¹⁸ *Isaiah* 56. 10, 11.

the righteous Judge. The *Man-stealer* pleads *interest* as his apology: the *Property* excuses himself upon the impracticability of fulfilling his duties: and the Legislator urges the exigency of the case, and the bad policy of emancipation. The Minister is addressed: didst thou inculcate, that the Slave Merchant was the greatest criminal in society? didst thou enjoin the exhibition of love, and justice, and mercy? didst thou *preach deliverance to the captive*? didst thou warn the Lawgiver of his usurpation, in enacting laws subversive of my supremacy, contradictory to my word, derogatory to thy nature, and condemned by thy conscience? No, Lord—I *was afraid, and went and hid thy talent in the earth*. Thou a Christian and a Slave-holder! thy portion is with thieves. Thou a *man* and not obey my commands! but *thou didst not know thy Lord's will, thou shalt be beaten with few stripes*. Thou a Legislator, and overturn the law of God! *Thou didst love and make a lie*: drown him and his *policy* in everlasting fire. Thou a Watchman, and not admonish them: *cast ye the unprofitable servants into outer darkness*. GOD BE MERCIFUL TO US SINNERS!

Slave-holders plead that they are Christians. In what principles does Christianity consist? Buying souls, kidnapping children, tormenting women, brutalizing men, robbing the labourer, and oppressing the innocent captive; then are they indeed *Saints*!

But the BOOK unequivocally declares, that to enslave a man is the highest kind of theft; to purloin children is the compound of all robbery, as it steals a Father's joy, a Mother's tenderness, a Brother's delight, and a Sister's affection; to excruciate a female by stripes or by violation, is the height of barbarity; to divest man of his rational characteristics is the most diabolical impiety; to defraud the friendless and overpowered dependent of his just recompense, is the very mass of all injustice; to destroy feminine modesty is the source of all other crimes personal and relative; to profane the sabbath absolutely disavows the authority of God, and salvation by Christ Jesus; and to prolong human existence in agony, the mind bereft of all consolation and the body of needful support is a concatenation of crime indescribable. Can the perpetrators, the defenders, the compromisers, the participators, and the connivers, who by any mode protract such inexpressible flagitiousness be Christians? ¹⁹

¹⁹ Sceptics, Infidels, and Worldlings ridicule the endeavor to combine Slavery

The BOOK condemns this turpitude as the most atrocious criminality: and no man can momentarily admit, that unerring rectitude sanctions a system of iniquity. Whether we advert to the motives, the objects, or the results of slavery, it is totally incompatible with Christianity.

Slave-holding is a substitution of Mammon for God. Avarice originated and perpetuates man-stealing. Wealth is the sole desire of every flesh-merchant; and all *Traders in the persons of men*, exhibit conduct, which is as essentially different from the devotional, philanthropic, and equitable demands of the gospel, as the purity of Paradise is dissimilar to the depravation of Pandemonium.

Are any persons so lamentably blind, that they cannot discern the anti-christianity of robbing the rights of man, the impiety of *turning the blind from the way*, disobedience in rendering all sacred ordinances a nullity, cruelty in the diversified pain with which they have burdened their servants, and dishonesty in falsehood, fraud, and stealing, who should expose their delusions, and rouse them from their stupor? *The Minister of the Sanctuary.*²⁰

Persons through Satanic delusion, will hear the most solemn verities, unaffected. An Expositor of the scriptures may enforce justice and mercy; but the Slave-holder avows, that he is a righteous man, for he only bought his Negro and kidnapped the children; he did not sail to Africa and transport them: he alleges, that he is merciful, for he bestows upon his slaves, *meat once daily*, his neighbours give them none. A Preacher should demonstrate, that his pretended justice is a cheat; his mercy is savageness; and that *he who turns away his ear from hearing the law, even his prayers are an abomination to the Lord. He regards iniquity in his heart, the Lord will not hear him.* But if the PULPIT, the *Trumpet gives an uncertain sound, none can prepare himself for the battle.*

To *pray and kidnap!* to commune and rob men's all! to preach

and Christianity; and acknowledge that it is utterly impracticable, to compound Gospel Morality, Columbian Republicanism, Justice, and Humanity, with the traffic in human flesh, and blood, and souls.

²⁰ The clergy, by their vocation, are the messengers of truth; they ought to watch society, to expose its errors, and bring the wicked back to truth and virtue; if their conduct be otherwise, the public sins will fall on their head. They know not the truth, or they dare not reveal it, and are therefore, partners in national crimes. *Cugoano.*

justice, and *steal* the laborer with his recompence! to recommend mercy to others, and exhibit cruelty in our own conduct! to explain religious duties, and ever impede the performance of them! to propound the example of Christ and his Apostles, and declare that a Slave-holder imitates them! to enjoin an observance of the Lord's day, and drive the slaves from the temple of God! to inculcate every social affection, and instantly exterminate them! to expatiate upon bliss eternal, and preclude sinners from obtaining it! to unfold the woe of Tophet, and not drag men from its fire! are the most preposterous delusion, and the most consummate mockery.²¹

Slavery is a flagrant violation of every law of God, nature, and society; it cannot be reconciled with the gospel; and he who *ever* acts in direct opposition to the Messias' government, and who indurates his soul against the impressions of that LIGHT, which would convict and regenerate him, cannot be a genuine disciple of HIM, who when the *hour was come*, invoked his Father, *Sanctify them through thy truth; thy word is truth!*

²¹ These reflections are calculated to disoblige those who are interested: but regardless of consequences, without the least dislike to any man living, and actuated only by a love to truth, and the advancement of Christianity, I protest against such abuses. I have received no affront, conceived no disgust, I have pleaded the example of others. I have soothed myself, I have endeavoured to reconcile my conscience, but *what is man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?* Simpson.

CHAPTER V.

EXCUSES FOR SLAVERY EXAMINED.

THE whole defence of Slavery is comprized in a plea of *right* or *apology*. Every argument upon these principles is nugatory; and many of them may be effectually retorted. They all may be reduced to these allegations.

The antiquity and extensiveness of man-stealing; the design of God that the descendants of Ham should be servants of servants; Jewish example; the silence of the New Testament upon slavery; the title acquired by purchase; the injustice of depriving men of property without an equivalent; the legal impediments to emancipation; the dangers attending a general liberation; and the impracticability of safely effecting a manumission.

Ancient and universal practice justifies no transgression; prophecy is neither the rule of duty nor a vindication of crime; Christ is our exemplar; the BOOK condemns involuntary servitude; no claim to man as property is valid; men should resign their thefts, and make restitution; all civil laws which annul the ordinances of God, are a non-entity; the path of duty is safety; and tyranny with avarice predominates; therefore, no method is devised by which Columbian Slaves! may enjoy the rights of man.

“Negroes being descendants of Ham, some have thought their contemptuous treatment of them countenanced by Noah’s curse.¹ But this prophecy does not include all Ham’s posterity, and will not serve as a warrant to enslave them; because it is not a rule for the direction of our practice; but the prediction of a future event. The greatest crimes have been foretold; the treachery of Judas and the crucifixion of Christ; but the wickedness of committing these sins was not lessened.

“It is much insisted on that the Israelites held slaves, either bought or taken captive; whom their masters kept, exchanged or

¹ *Genesis* 9. 25.

disposed of, as their own goods! But the Jews were not allowed to hold any of their brethren in perpetual slavery; but individuals only of heathen nations. The moral law of love to mankind was not less obligatory under the Old Testament dispensation, than it is under the New; but God granted the members of the Jewish State a right to the perpetual service of those idolatrous individuals, whom they should buy.² But this will no more warrant people of other states to hold their fellow men in perpetual slavery, than the grant which God made the Israelites of the jewels of the Egyptians, or of the lands inhabited by the nations of Canaan, will authorize any people to take possession of the lands or wealth of their neighbours. God may give a positive command which is an exception from the moral law with regard to human property or life; but this is his prerogative; and if Creatures pretend to do so, they impiously affect equality with God.”³

“The example of faithful Abraham,⁴ and the law of Moses,⁵ are adduced. It is argued, that since Abraham had servants born in his house and bought with money, they must have been servants for life, like our negroes: and hence it is concluded, that it is lawful for us to purchase heathen servants, and if they have children born in our houses, also to make them slaves. From the law of Moses, the advocates for perpetual slavery contend, that the Israelites were authorized to leave the children of their servants, as an inheritance to their own children for ever: and hence, it is inferred, that we may leave the children of our slaves as an inheritance to our children for ever. If this was immoral in itself, a just God would never have given it the sanction of his authority; and if lawful in itself, we may safely follow the example of Abraham, or act according to the law of Moses. Abraham was commanded to circumcise all who were born in his house, or bought with money: he obeyed the command without delay, and actually circumcised every male in his family. This law of circumcision continued in force; and by the law of Moses, it was not repealed, but confirmed. Now, to the circumcised were committed the oracles of God; and circumcision was a token of that covenant, by which, among other things, the land

² *Leviticus* 25. 44-46.

³ *Brown's Dictionary of the Holy Bible.*

⁴ *Genesis* 17.

⁵ *Leviticus* 25.

of Canaan, and their various privileges in it, were promised to Abraham and his seed; to all who were included in that covenant. But all were included, to whom circumcision, the token of the covenant, agreeably to God's command, was administered. By divine appointment, not only Abraham and his natural seed, but he who was bought with money of any stranger that was not of his seed, was circumcised. Since the seed of the stranger received the token of this covenant, he was included and interested in it; and the benefits promised were conferred upon him. Those persons bought with money were no longer looked upon as uncircumcised and unclean, as aliens and strangers; but were incorporated with the church and nation of the Israelites: and became one people with them, God's covenanted people. The divine law enjoined upon the Israelites, thus to circumcise all the males born in their houses; then if the purchased servants had any children, their masters were bound by the law to incorporate them into their church and nation. These children then were the servants of the Lord, in the same sense as the natural descendants of Abraham were; and therefore according to the law they could not be made slaves.⁶ Instead of being authorized, the Israelites were evidently forbidden to enslave their servant's children; and therefore so far from proving the lawfulness of our enslaving the children of the Africans, the practice is clearly condemned as criminal. In the law of Moses, no mention is made of the children of these servants, or that they should be servants, or any thing concerning them; because they were already provided for by the law of circumcision. The word *forever* is evidently limited by the nature of the subject; and the sense is, *they shall serve you and your children as long as they live, or until the Jubilee*. These scriptures have been frequently and *wickedly* pressed into the service of Mammon: but this formidable artillery may be fairly wrested from the enemy, to the destruction of the hosts of Mammonites.⁷

"No formal reproof of slavery occurs in the New Testament. Other vices prevailed at that period, which are not expressly reproofed: but they were certainly condemned by the Redeemer and his Disciples, as evidently contrary to their doctrine. Polygamy and

⁶ *Leviticus* 25. 38-55.

⁷ *Rice*.

divorce were allowed and practised, yet no express prohibition of them is recorded; but in many passages of the Gospel it is necessarily implied. To detain our fellow-men in perpetual slavery is unjust, from many scriptures, particularly from the Apostles' exhortation: *Masters, give unto your servants that which is just and equal: knowing that ye also have a Master in heaven: neither is there respect of persons with him.*⁸ The word translated *equal*, signifies *equality*: importing that masters ought to behave towards their servants not only with strict justice, but with mildness and benignity, as man ought to deal with man."⁹

This command alone is sufficient to confute and denounce every *Man-Thief*. A Slave-holder's *justice* defrauds his neighbour, of his wife, his children, and their labour, deprives them of all religious instruction, and robs them of every terrestrial comfort. His *equalizing beneficence* destroys in all civil and moral relations, his stolen dependents. Notwithstanding he simulates that he is the follower of those, *who continued in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread and in prayers, and who parted their possessions and goods to all men, as every man had need.*¹⁰ Can it be believed, that he who thus displays his *nonconformity* to Paul's injunction, is an *acceptable* member of the same "church of Christ which daily improved not in numbers only, but in the zeal and fervour, holiness and charity of its members; beginning a kind of heavenly life upon earth, and being even in their worldly goods, as well as in their hearts and affections, so perfectly united, that they became the wonder of their very enemies." Neither of the Apostles, nor of the Disciples, nor of the 120, nor of the 3000 Pentecost Converts, nor of the 5000 Believers, who saw the miracle performed upon the lame man, nor of the multitudes who were of one heart and one soul, nor of the Priests who were obedient to the faith, were *Man-stealers*.¹¹ Peter and John were *not* kidnappers; *silver and gold have I none*. Joses Barnabas, though a Cyprusian, and all those upon whom was great grace, were *not* Negro-Pedlars; they sold lands and houses, but *no souls*. Paul was no Slave-Driver; *these hands have ministered unto my necessities, and to*

⁸ *Colossians* 4. 1.

⁹ *Brown's Dictionary of the Bible*.

¹⁰ *Acts* 2. 40-47.

¹¹ *Acts* 3. 4. 5. Chapters.

*them who were with me: we wrought with labour and travail night and day.*¹² A Slave-holder has no juster claim to the Christian character, than Demas, who forsook the Apostle, for the love of the present world; or Alexander the Copper-Smith, who did him much evil. *Of whom be thou ware also; for he hath greatly withstood our words.*¹³

“The FOOL who doubts, who asks for clearer proof,
Must hood-wink'd be indeed, and darkness love.”

This is the condemnation, that light is come into the world, and men love darkness rather than light, because their deeds are evil.

The apologists for tyranny state, that Paul advised servants to be contented with their servitude, and obedient to their masters; whom, though he charges to use their slaves well, he commands not to set them free; and that the Apostle exhorts bond-servants or slaves to abide with God in that condition: whereas if slavery be sinful, they should not remain in vassalage.¹⁴

“Christians were at that period under the Roman yoke, the government of the heathen; who were watching every opportunity to charge them with designs against the government, to justify their bloody persecutions. In such circumstances had the Apostle proclaimed liberty to the slaves, many of them would have been exposed to certain destruction, and the christian cause might have been ruined, without freeing a single man: this would have been the height of madness and cruelty. It was wise and humane merely to *hint, If thou mayest be made free, use it rather.*”¹⁵

“This clearly intimates that the persons in slavery whom he addressed might use the means to obtain their freedom. But although a man, from the impossibility of procuring his liberty, may continue with patience and holy contentment in bondage; yet he who detains him in that state, is chargeable with injustice and oppression.”¹⁶

No Man-stealer could have belonged to the church of Christ which was at Corinth: for this admonition which is triumphantly

¹² Acts 20. 34. 2 Thessalonians 3. 8. Philippians 3. 17.

¹³ 2 Timothy 4. 10, 14, 15.

¹⁴ 1 Corinthians 7. 20-24.

¹⁵ Rice.

¹⁶ Brown's Dictionary of the Holy Bible.

adduced as an unanswerable defence of Slave-holders is almost equivalent to the law of Moses, which prohibits any person from attempting to obstruct a slave in his escape, and enjoins upon all to aid his flight from bondage. Paul knew that the exactions and degradation of captivity were totally incompatible with his preaching; he herefore advised slaves, to procure their freedom without delay; the means their own judgment might regulate, in subordination to the dictates of the BOOK. The wealthy primitive Christians bought the liberty of converted slaves; but though they were thus purchased, Paul instructs the buyers, that they were not *property*; for he commands the manumitted brethren to be no longer unconditional servants, as they were the Lord's freemen. He who attempts to arrest a run-away slave, is a cruel and base *Negro-Thief*; and not less culpable than the Tyrant, who scourges his returned slave to an inanimate corpse; for he is an accessory.

The bondage of Onesimus and the high character of Philemon are often cited to sanction the abominations of slavery. Onesimus was a servant for debt, who absconded previous to its discharge; yet evangelical philanthropy exonerated him from all obligation.¹⁷ When a Christian kidnapper! can prove that his slaves owe him *any thing*, the plea derived from the servitude of Onesimus shall be heard; but while he has done all possible wrong to his brother, and has stolen his life, his liberty, and his happiness; as long as his whole conduct is "incurable injustice;" we shall affirm, that Man-stealers and their co-adjutors are the unlearned and unstable, who wrest this, as they do also the other scriptures to their own destruction: and that like Simon Magus, Slave-holders and their abettors have neither part nor lot in the matter; but are in the gall of bitterness and the bond of iniquity; *for their hearts are not right in the sight of God.*

"It is asserted, that Negroes were made slaves by law, they were converted into *property* by an act of the legislature; and under the sanction of that law they were purchased; they therefore became my property, I have a legal claim to them. To repeal this law, to annihilate slavery, would be violently to destroy what I legally purchased with my money, or inherit from my Father. It would be equally unjust with dispossessing me of my horses, cattle, or any

¹⁷ *Paul's epistle to Philemon.*

other species of property. To dispossess me of their offspring would be injustice equal to dispossessing me of the annual profits of my estate."

"Many years ago, men, being deprived of their natural right to freedom, were made slaves, and by law converted into property. This law was wrong for it *established iniquity*; it was against the law of humanity, of common sense, of reason, and of conscience. It was however a law; and under the sanction of it, a number of men, regardless of its iniquity, purchased these slaves, and made their fellow-men their property. The question is concerning the liberty of a man. He himself claims it as his own property. He pleads that it was originally his own; that he has never forfeited, he could not alienate it; and therefore by the common laws of justice and humanity, it is still his own. The purchaser of the slave claims the same property. He pleads, that he purchased it under the sanction of a law, enacted by the legislature; and therefore it became his. Who has the best claim? Did this property belong to the legislature? Was it vested in them? If legislatures are possessed of such property as this, may another never exist!" Amen and Amen. "No individual of their constituents could claim it as their inherent right; it was not in them collectively; and therefore they could not convey it to their representatives. Was it ever known, that a people chose representatives to create and transfer this kind of property? The legislature were not, could not be possessed of it; and therefore could not transfer it to another; they could not give what they themselves had not. Does the property belong to him, who received it from a legislature that had it not to give, and by a law which they had no right to enact; or to the original owner, who could never forfeit his right? If a law should pass to sell an innocent man's head, and I should purchase it: have I in consequence of this law and this purchase, a better claim to the man's head than he has himself? To call our fellowmen, our property, is a gross absurdity, a contradiction to common sense, and an indignity to human nature. The owners of slaves are then *licensed robbers*, and not the just proprietors of what they claim: freeing them is not depriving them of property, but restoring it to the right owner; it is suffering the unlawful captive to escape. It is not wronging the master, but doing justice to the slave, restoring him to himself.

"You say, that emancipation would be unjust, because it would

deprive men of their property: but is there no injustice on the other side? Is nobody entitled to justice, but slave-holders? Let us weigh the injustice in an even balance. Here is a man deprived of all property, of all capacity to possess property, of his own free agency, of the means of instruction, of his wife, of his children, and of every thing dear to him; and a man deprived of 80 or a 100 pounds. Who is the greatest sufferer, and which is treated with the greatest injustice? Emancipation would only take away property that is its own property, and not ours; property that has the same right to possess us, as we have to possess it: property that has the same right to convert our children into dogs, and calves and colts, as we have to convert theirs into these beasts: property that may transfer our children to strangers, by the same right that we transfer theirs.

"In America, a slave is a standing monument of the tyranny and inconsistency of human governments. He is declared by the united voice of America, to be by nature free, and entitled to the privilege of acquiring and enjoying property; and yet by laws passed and enforced in these states, he is retained in slavery, and dispossessed of all property and capacity of acquiring any. They have furnished a striking instance of a people carrying on a war in defence of principles, which they are actually and avowedly destroying by legal force; thus using one measure for themselves and another for their neighbours. All men are by nature free, and entitled to freedom, until they forfeit it. Now to enact that men are slaves, is to fly in our own face, to contradict ourselves; to proclaim before the world our inconsistency, and to warn men to repose no confidence in us? What credit can we ever expect? What confidence can we repose in each other? NONE.¹⁸

"Are we rulers? How can the people confide in us, after we have thus openly declared that we are void of truth and sincerity; and that we are capable of enslaving mankind in direct contradiction to our own principles? What confidence in legislators, who are capable of declaring their constituents all free men in one breath; and in the next, enacting them all slaves? In one breath, declaring that they have a right to acquire and possess property; and, in the next, that they shall neither acquire nor possess it

¹⁸ *The Legislatures of the Slave-holding States have not the confidence of Christians, because they believe not the BOOK.*

during their existence here? Can I trust my life, my liberty, my property in such hands as these? ¹⁹ Will the colour of my skin prove a sufficient defence against their injustice and cruelty? ²⁰ Will the particular circumstance of my ancestors being born in Europe, and not in Africa, defend me? ²¹ Will straight *hair* defend me from the blow that falls so heavy on the woolly head? ²² If I am a dishonest man, if gain is my God, and this may be acquired by such an unrighteous law, I may rejoice to find it enacted; but I never can believe that the legislature were honest men; or repose the least confidence in them, when their own interest leads them to betray it. I never can trust the integrity of that judge who can sit upon the seat of justice and pass an unrighteous judgment,²³ because it is agreeable to law; when that law itself is contrary to the light and law of nature." ²⁴

"Justice ought to extend her protection with rigid impartiality to the rich and to the poor, to the powerful and to the humble. A legislative contract for the continuance of slavery must have been void, even from the beginning; for it is an outrage upon justice, and only another name for fraud, robbery and murder; as well might an individual think himself bound by a promise to commit an assassination. Our proceeding on such grounds, would infringe all the principles of law, and subvert the very foundation of morality. Slavery is a mass, a system of enormities, which incontrovertibly bid defiance to every regulation which ingenuity can devise, or power effect, but a total extinction." ²⁵

"Man-stealers excuse themselves upon the plea, that if the slaves were emancipated, they could hardly be restrained from disorders which might endanger the public peace—No apprehension of this kind can excuse our continuing in an unjust and inhuman practice. The fear of man bringeth a snare. When the path of duty is plain, Christians should resolutely adhere to it, leaving the event to the Providence of God." ²⁶

¹⁹ *You are an IDIOT, if you trust men who swear that a Negro is property.*

²⁰ *They would paint you black, or steal you white, if they dared.*

²¹ *They would rather kidnap you, than an African.*

²² *Yes, until they are not afraid to strike.*

²³ *VERILY, they are "ROGUES ALL."*

²⁴ *Rice.*

²⁵ *William Pitt.*

²⁶ *Brown's Dictionary of the Holy Bible.*

"Of two evils, we should chuse the least: this is a good rule, when applied to natural evils; but with moral evils, it has nothing to do, for of these we chuse neither; if one be natural and the other a moral evil, we must always chuse the natural evil; for moral evil, sin, can never be an object of choice. Enslaving our fellow-creatures is a moral evil; and the natural evil effects of emancipation can never be a balance for the moral evils of slavery. These evils are chargeable on us. Hence, we should be sensible of the guilt of our conduct, and persist in it no longer.—This is a very powerful argument against slavery, a convincing proof of its iniquity. It ruins God's creatures whom he has made free moral agents, and accountable beings; who still belong to him, and who are not left to us to ruin at our pleasure." ²⁷

"Why ought slavery to be abolished? Because it is incurable injustice. Why is injustice to remain for a single hour?" ²⁸ "If the situation of Negroes were as happy as servitude could make them, I must not commit the *enormous crime* of selling man to man; for which not one reason can be given, that is consistent with POLICY, HUMANITY OR JUSTICE." ²⁹ "Never was a system so big with wickedness or cruelty; in whatever part of it you direct your view, the eye finds no comfort, no satisfaction, no relief. It is the prerogative of slavery to separate from evil its concomitant good, and to reconcile discordant mischiefs; it robs war of its generosity, it deprives peace of its security. You have the vices of polished society without its knowledge or its comforts; and the evils of barbarism without its simplicity. Its ravages are constant and unintermitted in the extent; in the continuance, universal and indiscriminate. No age, no sex, no rank, no condition is exempt from the fatal influence of this wide-wasting calamity! Thus it is the full measure of pure, unmixed, unsophisticated wickedness; and scorning all competition or comparison, it stands without a rival in the secure, undisputed possession of its detestable pre-eminence." ³⁰

Yet in Columbia! Gospel Ministers and Professing Christians not defend only, but engage in this unparalleled villainy! *My bowels,*

²⁷ *Rice.*

²⁸ *William Pitt.*

²⁹ *Charles James Fox.*

³⁰ *William Wilberforce.*

my bowels! I am pained at my very heart; my heart maketh a noise in me: I cannot hold my peace.

Constantine, in the year 313, published an edict; which declared all those free, who had been condemned to slavery by Maxentius; commanding, under the severest penalties, all who held them in captivity to restore them to their liberty. In the year 316, he enacted another law, and addressed it to Protogenes, Bishop of Smyrna; by which he permitted all masters to enfranchise their slaves in the presence of Christians, assembled with their pastors in the church, without recurring to the praetors and consuls. "Thus the manumission of slaves, which before was attended with great difficulties and expence, became easy, and not chargeable; the masters being obliged to attend only at the church." Christianity will always abolish slavery; no danger attaches to an immediate and universal emancipation; and the only effectual mode to eradicate the evil, is to destroy *thieving by law*; to follow Constantine's example; to *break every yoke*; to *let the oppressed go free*; and to fulfil Paul's direction, *let him that stole, steal no more*.³¹

The ancient and universal extension of slavery is an effectual argument against the system. Its origin in days of moral darkness affords a powerful plea against its equity and continuance; and the support which modern Man-stealers derive from this example is visionary. Servitude in Abraham's family was very different from the degradation of our colored population. Eliezer of Damascus was the Patriarch's steward, and his servants, had he died childless, would have been his heirs.³² But as they worshipped Abraham's God, and were included in the covenant made with him, by circumcision, they were governed with paternal benevolence. The Heads of Families, when they lived a wandering life, were civil governors of all who served them.³³

From the conduct of Isaac and Jacob, no principle can be deduced in defence of slavery. Modern Slave-holders shall have all

³¹ *Ephesians* 4. 28.

³² *Genesis* 15. 3.

³³ The original Hebrew states not, that the Domestics whom Abraham bought with his money, or who were descended from them, were involuntary servants: for the word includes no such idea, as modern slavery. Our laws, opinions, practice and management of these degraded sons of wretchedness, all declare, that in our judgment, they are merely cattle in human shape.

the consolation which they can extract from the long-protracted generality of man-stealing, when they can evidence their title to the approbation which the Lord expressed of Abraham.⁸⁴

By universal antiquity, an incessant violation of every law of decency, virtue, and religion might be established as the highest duty of man.

How astonishing the fact! Professing Christians transform the BOOK into a minister of unrighteousness; and when impelled from one subterfuge resort to another. If Nimrod's oppressions are urged against their impiety, they take refuge in Abraham's faith; and if the Patriarch's justice and judgment which they never exemplify, inculcate their condemnation, they shelter themselves under the prediction of Noah, which denounced servitude as the inheritance of Canaan's posterity; thus perverting the word of God, into a sanction of their abominations.

The declaration that Canaan's descendants shall be servants is thrice repeated; but Ham's other posterity are not included; for Ham's name is not even introduced.⁸⁵ The denunciation of Noah has been remarkably verified in the history of the Canaanites, who from the period when the iniquity of the Amorites was full, have seldom been released from the exactions of foreign tyrants. But if the prophecy be referred to the descendants of Ham generally, the curse has not been experienced by the people. The partial slavery of Negroes will not invalidate the truth; because no ancient and accessible part of the inhabited globe is so completely unknown as the interior of Africa.⁸⁶

Would the passage bear the construction which Slave-dealers assert; their criminality would not be diminished. The mercy of God has not revealed to us, the knowledge of future occurrences, if the actions which shall produce the events detailed include guilt in the perpetrator, that we may unite in the completion of them;

⁸⁴ *Genesis* 18. 16-19.

⁸⁵ *Genesis* 9. 25-27.

⁸⁶ How many Negroes are sold and bought like beasts in a market, and conveyed from one quarter of the world, to do the work of beasts in another! This however in no measure vindicates the covetous and barbarous oppression of those, who thus enrich themselves with the products of their sweat and blood. God will severely punish such cruel injustice. How can it consist with love to our neighbours, to hold them in slavery? *Scott.*

but that the truth of the Scriptures may be indubitably established.

This transmutation of the word of God, by claiming a prophetic curse, or a controverted doctrine, or a dubious scripture, as a rule for our actions, and a defence of our sins, thereby authorizing any man to distort the Book, into a prediction of crimes which he had resolved to commit, is a most dangerous and reprehensible delusion. God has most emphatically attested, that his wrath shall be effused upon Babylon; but the persons who execute the judgment will doubtless perform the grand design, from selfish and ambitious views. Christians will mark the progress of the vengeance, and rejoice in the destruction, but they will not actively participate in the horrors of the tremendous overthrow.³⁷

Negro-dealers adduce the Mosaic law and Jewish example as an excuse for their avarice; but this originates in ignorance of the ancient economy, or misinterpretation of the Book, or a falsification of the facts, or corrupt deductions from the scriptural narrative.

Every practice which requires a sophistical interpretation of the sacred volume to countenance it, must be *sin*. The path of duty is illumination; and in morals and religion, any action which obliges us to search after arguments to pacify us in the perpetration of it, is a transgression of the divine command.

The theocratical establishment was appointed by God, to preserve the children of Israel a distinct nation. To them were committed the divine oracles, that the fundamental principles of all religion and morality might not be totally banished from the earth. The severest regulations respecting their intercourse with idolators were consequently indispensable. All the inhibitions of their Lawgiver which referred to the Gentiles were promulged, to preserve the Israelites pure from the surrounding contagion; and it was necessary that the worshippers of false Gods who might reside among

³⁷ Martin Luther and Henry VIII. were employed in diminishing the Papal supremacy. The Reformer engaged the anti-christian rule with the armour of God; his was a bloodless contest, waged from celestial motives, conducted with evangelic ardour, productive of the most glorious triumphs, and rewarded with honour and immortality. A Tyrant's acts, through the dispensations of an all-benevolent God, involved a similar result: but his arms were terrestrial power, his war, a combat for superiority, his impulse, lasciviousness, his fervor, the offspring of ambition and sensuality, and his memory is consigned to unmitigable execration.

them, or who might be subdued in war, should be considered as people inferior to themselves, on account of their ignorance of Jehovah, the only true God. They were therefore authorized to purchase and retain such persons as slaves. But the Jewish writers attest, that Heathens who had been thus enslaved, if they continued Idolators at the close of the first year, were returned to the country whence they were procured; if they remained in the land, having acknowledged the Lord God of Israel, unless they voluntarily consented to stay with their masters, and the recognition of this fact was most solemn and public, they were manumitted at the return of the Sabbatical year; even if they had thus devoted themselves to the service of others, at the sound of the Jubilee trumpet, every man throughout the land of Canaan, was instantaneously free. Had not this been Jewish practice, it would not have attested the events which it was destined to prefigure.

The Mosaic law has been most grossly distorted for avaricious purposes. By it the Jews were authorized to purchase the neighbouring Idolators for bond men, but they were not sanctioned in enslaving their children.³⁸ The offspring could not have been retained in bondage; because every child born in the family was circumcised at 8 days old, became a member of the covenant, and was heir to all the blessings of Palestine, as much as a real descendant of the Father of the faithful. A Jew could not steal, sell, or make merchandize of one of these, more than he could have violently transported one of his brethren for sale to the land of the Ishmaelites.

Jewish history affords an insurmountable objection to slavery. Joshua and the Elders, to punish their deception, doomed the Gibeonites to perpetual attendance at the temple; but Saul's oppression of their descendants was the cause of a three years' dearth in the land.³⁹ The sword, pestilence, and famine, were all denounced against Judah, in consequence of their unrighteous exactions from the widow, the orphan, the impoverished, the stranger, and those whom they had enslaved.⁴⁰ How seductive is avarice! Notwithstanding the Jews had not long been released from Chaldean vas-

³⁸ Leviticus 25. 44-46.

³⁹ Joshua 9. 3-27. 2 Samuel 21. 1-14.

⁴⁰ Jeremiah 34. 8-22.

salage, speedily after their return to Canaan, they began to oppress the poor, and to defraud the wretched; contrary to the law of Moses, and in direct defiance of their own sensibilities, agitated still with the remembrance of the miseries which in banishment they had endured.⁴¹ If involuntary servitude be defensible upon moral principles, high example would sanction it; but it would not be known that slavery existed among the Jews, if the Prophets had not menaced them for this atrocious criminality. So far is the Mosaic code from legalizing the cruelty which Slave-dealers constantly exhibit, that a considerable proportion of the Jewish Legislator's mandates are solely directed to the inculcation of merciful tempers, and the exhibition of generous affections towards inferiors.

To impress the children of Israel with a permanent sense of all the horrors of captivity, to imbue them with the most active sympathy for human wo, and to nurture the most ardent desires and zeal to mitigate the distresses of their fellow-men; they were continually reminded of the degradation, wretchedness, and oppressions, under which their ancestors in Egypt so long groaned, and whence they were delivered solely by the might arm of Jehovah Nissi. The recollection of their former national servitude, and the miracles which were requisite to deliver them from their Taskmasters, must have inspired in every pious Jew, a holy and insuperable aversion from the principle and practice of slavery, and of every iniquitous approach to the infliction of the wo. Soul-Merchants can designate no Heaven-delegated Prophet, no exemplary Priest, no Christian Apostle, no martyred Disciple of the Lamb that was slain, and neither of them upon whom was great grace, of *whom the world was not worthy, strangers and pilgrims on earth*, who was a Man-stealer's co-adjutor. From the exalted abodes of perennial felicity, in which the spirits of the just made perfect dwell, if they know what passes upon earth, they must feel all holy indignation, that *men of corrupt minds, destitute of the truth*, who *suppose that gain is godliness*, should pervert their characters, opinions, and example, into a mass of hard-heartedness, worldly equivocations, and the "highest kind of theft," with the direct view of procuring a sanction from the pious dead, for the iniquitous practices of the ungodly living.

⁴¹ Nehemiah. 5. 1-13.

Columbians plead justification for stealing and enslaving Africans; they are of a different colour, and not Christians, therefore we are authorized to kidnap them for our avarice and luxury. Such is an Algerine's defence for selling every 'Infidel dog' whom he can grasp; they are not Mussulmen; the tinge of his skin shews that he is not of the Prophet's family; steal and torment him. Thus men depart from the ways of righteousness! their principles are deceptive; their desires are after covetousness; their solitudes are earthly, sensual, devilish! and to them the gospel is hid, because the god of this world hath blinded their minds!

Christ and the Apostles are our sole pattern. The admission of varied temporary indulgences among the Israelites, as a basis for our conduct, would totally destroy society. If the example of David, Solomon and others, is to be valid, in cases where they acted without or against the directions of the Mosaic code,⁴² the gospel is nugatory, and Christ has died in vain.

At the promulgation of the law from Mount Sinai, to render its prescription more authoritative, the Lord enforces its requisitions by reminding them of his mercy and power, and of their misery; claiming obedience for his character, his loving kindness, and their deliverance. *I am the Lord thy God, who brought thee out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage.*⁴³

A company of Ishmaelites, with a horde of stolen captives, approach the habitation of a man who conscientiously desires to fulfil the law of God; they offer to sell him an Egyptian; a Levite accosts him, and asks, if he can reconcile the purchase of that man as his slave, with all the horrors which are included in the declaration of Jehovah, as the exordium of the law, and with the mercy which the code invariably requires; with this recollection could he buy a bond-man?

Cainites with a number of kidnapped Africans, traffic slaves at a Columbian's door. Say to him, were not you oppressed by a foreign tyrant, you rebelled and obtained your freedom, how can you enthrall these outcasts? dare you purchase these heirs of wo, who were stolen at their birth, and can you enslave them for ever? You swear, that all men are born free; you believe, that man-stealing is

⁴² Deuteronomy 17. 17.

⁴³ Exodus 20. 2.

the greatest crime; you know, that slave-holding is contrary to equity, humanity, and reciprocal benevolence; you feel, that you would most ardently reprobate and resist such conduct if it were attempted respecting you; and your conscience assures you, that God will requite you, as you have injured your fellow-man: but he buys, and enslaves these wretched victims of avarice! *A Christian Republican!* No charity can induce the belief that a man who acknowledges the excellence of pure and undefiled religion, can be so incurably blinded, or that the moral sense can be so completely extinguished, that he is incapable to perceive the difference between evangelical righteousness, and incessant cruelty, rapine and oppression.

No disciple of Messias can plead Jewish example. *Call no man Master upon earth.* Negro-dealers must demonstrate, either that the Lord and his primitive disciples were Slave-holders, or that their doctrines and precepts countenance the system.

As HE who had not where to lay his head, or his Apostles were not human flesh weighers, Oppressors plead, that the New-Testament is altogether silent upon slavery; and if it were so condemnable, it would have been pointedly reprobated. Our Lord did not admonish Man-stealers, by their own appellation, to desist from their ungodliness; but he who can reconcile the Redeemer's doctrines, and Apostolic injunctions with American bondage, can join heaven and hell—to him, vice and virtue, equity and injustice, kindness and cruelty, oppression and benevolence, thieving and probity, infidelity and religion, all are identical.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ All defence of slavery, upon the silence of the New Testament respecting this crime, is baseless.

Matthew 5. 7. 31-43, and 6. 12, 14, 15, 19-21, 24, and 7. 1, 2, 12, 16, 20, and 10. 31-42. and 18. 21-35, and 19. 16-30. and 22. 34-40. and 23. 23, 24. and 25. 31-46. Mark 10. 17-31. and 11. 15-18. Luke 4. 16-22 and 6. 27-38. and 10. 25-37. and 11. 46-52 and 12. 13-21. and 18, 18-30. and 19. 1-10. John 13. 1-20, and 15. 12-14. Acts 2. 41-47 and 4. 32-37 and 17. 24-28. Romans 2. 1-3, 17-19. and 12. 9, 10. and 13. 8-10. 1 Corinthians 7. 21-33. and 13. 4-7. Ephesians 4. 25-32. and 6. 9. Colossians 4. 1. 1 Timothy 1. 10. 2 Timothy 3. 2-8. Philemon 10-21. James 2. 1-10. and 5. 4. 1 Peter 4. 8. 1 John 2. 15-17. and 3. 14-18. and 4. 20, 21. Revelation 18. 13.

ALL things whatsoever ye would that men should do unto you, do ye even so unto them: for this is the LAW and the Prophets. If any man can deduce the injustice, the barbarity, and the oppressions of man-stealing, from this

Negro Dealers aver, that they have a just title to their slaves. How can a claim to the human race as property, be valid? All our terrestrial possessions were included in the original grant made to Adam in Paradise,⁴⁵ and to Noah and his Sons after the deluge.⁴⁶ But *human life*, with all the concomitants which are necessary to a fulfilment of its objects, was excepted: therefore, no title, by any lapse of time, or any distance of transfer, or any terrestrial authority, ever could be made to the persons of men.

'They *innocently* and *honestly* obtained possession of their slaves, and if the State liberate them, they ought to be remunerated.' What obduracy! Men require to be paid for ceasing from the highest kind of theft; and demand to be requited for delivering that which they stole. How can a Slave-Driver be innocent or honest, in his connection with his dependents? No domestic tyrant believes his own assertion, he feels, that he is a cruel Oppressor! and it is equitable, to manumit his slaves. Instead of rewarding men for stealing no more, the whole that they have *filched* from the poor Negro, with ample addition for all the misery and cruelty which he has endured, should be righteously exacted.

The Legislatures of some States have obstructed the easy emancipation of slaves.—Slave-holders elect men to enact iniquitous laws, and exonerate themselves by the legislative proceedings. Every voter for a public officer, who will not destroy the system, is as culpable as if he participated in the evil, and is responsible for the protraction of the crime. If a slave cannot be liberated in one State, he may in another, and it is an individual's duty to exonerate himself. No human law must be obeyed when it contravenes the divine command; but slavery is the combination of all iniquity, and therefore every man is obligated not to participate in its corruption.

fundamental rule of social reciprocity, his moral alembic must combine properties vastly different from any extractor yet discovered.

These citations either immediately reprobate covetousness, extortion, and tyranny, or they inculcate justice, philanthropy, and mercy; and it is absolutely impossible to conjoin these directions and examples with the bondage of men, or to explain them in any manner, by which Slave-holders are not most indigantly and awfully censured.

⁴⁵ Genesis 1. 28-30.

⁴⁶ Genesis 9. 1-7.

In all cases obedience to the divine will combines the most certain safety. God will protect those who act in conformity with his commands; and as no plea can avail for the continuance of slavery one moment, since its iniquity is so prodigious—the most secure mode to be absolved from danger, is “*cease to do evil and learn to do well.*” The national difficulty is not from emancipation, but from servitude. *Negro-Pedlars* say that if the colored people were *free*, the property, and lives of the other inhabitants would be jeopardized. This is a gratuitous assumption; and will not excuse the sin. Some Negroes may be so vitiated that they would commit depredations, for as the slaves have never seen any practices in their tyrants but oppression, it would be preposterous not to anticipate that the uninstructed servant, would act like him, whom he has seen honored in proportion to the quantum of his theft. A man in the Slave-states who claims no Negroes is *despised*; if he has kidnapped a score, he is a *Gentleman*; but if he has stolen a hundred, he is a NABOB.⁴⁷

Every plea and excuse in support of Slavery being invalid, originating in depravity, sustained by corruption, and productive of all diversified ungodliness, no *Christian* can allege, or defend them, or practice the iniquity which they are formed to exculpate.

⁴⁷ How shall we expel the evil? Colonization is totally impracticable. The enactment of a law to exclude Slave-holders from every Public Office, would instantly destroy the pestilence which ravages the body politic:—all other regulations are futile.

CONCLUSION.

MEN AND BRETHREN!

HEAR the word of admonition. If such be the origin, character, defence and effects of slavery, such its contradiction to sound reason, such its opposition to the rights of man, such its aversion from every affectionate sensibility, and such its condemnation by the Word of God, how can you participate in its wickedness? Is it not almost incredible, that citizens of the United States, the only land of civil and religious freedom, should have established a system of servitude which extinguishes every personal right, nullifies every sacred obligation; and that Christians should maintain this atrocity? Tell it not in Gath. Messias' Disciples profess that they are probationers for that *kingdom and glory* to which God has called his children. But adaptation is indispensable to our admission at Heaven's gate. Can any rational mind believe that a man who has passed his threescore years and ten in the spirit and practice of all the merciless oppressions which are the invariable concomitant of slavery, is capacitated to engage in the devotions, to exemplify the righteousness, or to manifest the love which reign in the boundless regions of eternal felicity?

That worship of God upon earth he restrained; that equity he never cultivated; that charity he always counteracted. A meetness for Paradise, he has consequently not attained. How can the Christian Church longer tolerate so shameless an absurdity as a profession of religion, and eternal *man-stealing*?¹

The Officers of the Church are undeniably censurable. Of two sects of Christians, the public formularies expressly reprobate slavery, as the highest crime which can be perpetrated, and any connection with it, as ample evidence, that the parties are not fol-

¹ How did the Devil persuade men that a Slave-holder was a Christian? This is a problem totally incapable of solution, by any human ingenuity or wisdom.

lowers of the Lamb. This is their FAITH: what are their works? Publish it not in Askelon.

You are now, all called to repentance.—Preachers, Elders, Exhorters, Deacons, Leaders, and Professors: how can you deny your own creed? how can you falsify your own faith? how can you profess that slavery is the highest crime against God and Man, and practise it? how can you promulge that a Slave-holder is the most guilty Thief, and notwithstanding yourselves continue to steal, and affirm that you are sanctified? how can you declare that “upon the principle of equity, no man can be a Slave-holder, that all Slave-holders are Negro-Stealers, the Devil’s Dogs and Children,” and nevertheless yourselves be characterized as merciless Flesh merchants? how dare you most solemnly admit *your own Faith*, promise to comply with it through all opposition and persecution, and notwithstanding, neither admonish the guilty, nor inculcate the Truth, but engage in *Man-stealing*, and sustain the Christian Negro-Thief in his religious Profession?

The Church of God groans. It is the utmost Satanic delusion to talk of religion and slavery. Be not deceived: to affirm that a Slave-holder is a genuine disciple of Jesus Christ, is most intelligible contradiction. A brother of him who went about doing good, and steal, enslave, torment, starve, and scourge a man because his skin is of a different tinge! Such Christianity is the Devil’s manufacture to delude souls to the regions of wo.

You are Christians! you profess that you feel *bowels of mercy*: and hold in *free-born* slavery the descendants of stolen Africans! Your Christianity is a *non-entity*. You are a Class-Leader! you ask your Class-mate, how he has lived during the past week?—he informs you, of his peace of conscience, and love of God and you saw him half-murdering his servants; you know that his dependent is naked, without food, houseless and miserable; *do you believe him?* You are a Deacon! You converse with a Professor: he assures you, that he endeavors to obtain heavenly bliss, conformably to the example of the Friend of Sinners; but you are certified that as a Magistrate, he swears, “all men are born free,” and nevertheless, detains his Christian brother in slavery: no man can credit such absurd contradictions. You are an Exhorter: you are at a Prayer Meeting: you ask your friends to engage in the exercises; they plead for the mercy, pardon, love, benevolence, and approbation of God, because they

manifest those affections in their intercourse with men, and notwithstanding hold slaves! can you subjoin an AMEN to such hypocrisy?

You are an Elder: you avow before the Church and the World that you believe the book which condemns *Slave-holding* or *Man-stealing* as the utmost iniquity; and yourself unmercifully lacerate colored women in the last state of pregnancy; or *tan* the servants whom you have flayed with salt, pepper and vinegar? Who can place the smallest confidence in you?

You are a Preacher: you have the Book as your light; and the Book as your sole remuneration. That Book informs you, that slavery is the acme of all unrighteousness; you are a Slave-holder! that Book teaches you, that the worst of all sinners is the Church-Officer who engages in the iniquity which he ought to reprove, or connives at the transgressor, whom he should admonish: Yet, you are either a Kidnapper or his Defender!

Longer to abet such inconsistency, to support with absurdity, or to continue in such guilt, must affix a death-warrant to the existence of the Church. It is absolutely impossible that religion can flourish among *Man-stealers*: and every mode except an immediate expulsion of obdurate Flesh-Dealers from the professed family of Christians, is a sanction of the crime, and a stigma on the BOOK.

Remember, Church-Officers, your awful responsibility: with the illumination of the sacred volume around you, can you rest in peace, with the conviction, that men are deluded, and you enlighten them not: can you risk the scrutiny of the bar of God, with the condemnation of impenitent Slave holders transferred to your negligence and intimidation; who can calmly assert or who himself believes, that Slavery is either equitable, merciful, or devotional; who *dare* to profess himself a Presbyterian or a Methodist and be connected in any form with man-stealing? Slave-Drivers sow to the Flesh; of the Flesh they reap corruption. Will you venture your everlasting felicity, upon a *perhaps*; upon an unfounded hope that so many have not been deceived; when that *perhaps*, that *hope* are both declared by the Book, to originate in idolatry, to exist through deceitfulness, and to end in Tophet?

You procrastinate—the enemy of souls urges you to cry *to-morrow*; —he advises the adoption of *prudent and moderate reform*; knowing that such amendment insures him more certain conquest: he excites

dread, by the menace of worldly displeasure, and the varied reproaches and privations which accompany it: you listen, you assent to the seduction, and the evil augments. The duration of all terrestrial vanities hastens to its close: in the result, you are individually interested; who can calmly anticipate righteous retribution upon the basis of man-stealing? who can peacefully contemplate the exchange of worlds, with the never-ceasing horrors of domestic oppressions unexpiated? who can fearlessly await the judgment of the Son of Man with the diversified iniquity and hard-heartedness of slavery recorded against him?

Christians! How long will you tacitly or openly sanction, or actually engage in a system which includes every practicable iniquity? Can you conscientiously believe, that a slave-holder exhibits that assimilation to the meek and lowly Jesus, which is indispensable to an enjoyment of the inheritance of the Saints in light? Are you prepared to answer all the demands, which equity may propound at the final examination of the last great day, when the enormities of slavery are weighed in the balance of the Judge? If so, *persevere*—but if not—be alarmed, and instantaneously desist from all participation in this ungodliness.

The doctrine which our Lord inculcates, in his narrative of the wondrous events that will occur on the day of our resurrection; is tremendous condemnation to the merciless and the unjust. Every gospel affection is totally extinguished, by the principles whence slavery flows, by the tempers which are its inseparable companion, and by the dispositions which it invariably engenders. The approbation which the Son of Man will express of all those who exemplified Christian philanthropy in their intercourse with their fellow-creatures, as strongly argues the reprobation which Oppressors may expect, as if they had already heard the awful irrevocable denunciation, "Depart, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the Devil and his Angels." Kiss the Son, lest he be angry, pluck out the right eye, cut off the right hand, and amputate the right foot; though thy slaves be equally precious as these necessary corporeal members, emancipate them. It is more profitable to thee, to pass through life in penury and scorn, and at death, to enter the Paradise of the Blessed, than to enjoy all earthly good, and at thy mortal dissolution, to be plunged into the abyss of wo—*where their worm dieth not—and the fire is not quenched.*

ANIMADVERSIONS.

THE authority of titled names should never impede the censures of truth: and the sanction which is given by them to error, ought ever to excite the more resolute opposition of those *who contend earnestly for the faith once delivered to the saints*. "Lectures on the subjects of Moral and Political Philosophy, by Samuel Stanhope Smith, D. D. L. L. D. are peculiarly deserving attention; as the doctrines advanced in them, uphold involuntary servitude.

"Is Slavery on any ground consistent with the natural laws of justice and humanity? Slavery is *contrary* both to justice and humanity. The whole of the African trade for slaves, is among the most atrocious inroads upon justice and humanity which have ever been practised in any age or by any nation. The hypocritical pretences which are made to justify it are as impudent, as the traffic is inhuman. Men deceive themselves continually by false pretences, in order to justify the slavery which is convenient for them.

Is that slavery which was unjust in its *origin*, equally unjust in its *continuance*? All men condemn the barbarity of dragging the simple Africans from their native country.

To confer on our American slaves, liberty; and otherwise, to meliorate their condition, are certainly objects worthy of a humane legislation. But private justice,¹ and natural selfishness will oppose insuperable difficulties to its execution. The citizens of these states hold *property* in slaves to a very large amount, acquired under the sanction of the laws. The laws could not equitably compel them to make a sacrifice of so great value, to the convenience and comfort of any class of men.² Neither justice nor humanity requires that the master who has become the *innocent* possessor of that property, should impoverish himself for the benefit of his slave. Their freedom might be obtained, by the laws favoring the grant of a *peculium* to slaves to be employed wholly for their own benefit, which might be sufficient to produce a revenue, adequate to the

¹ *Either the Philosopher or the Printer omitted two letters of this word, it should read, injustice.*

² *Is this preaching deliverance to the captive?*

purchase of his own freedom. So *mild* is the form of slavery at present, that it is customary to exact of any field-slave only a definite portion of labour in the day, called a *Task*. This task is usually calculated according to the strength of the weakest hand. What an admirable opportunity, with other portions of time which are already allowed them, for relaxation and amusement, to improve a peculium? ³

Slavery is preparing at some future period, much individual misery, and frequent and dangerous convulsions for the republic. It is a volcano which sleeps for a time only to burst at last upon the unsuspecting tranquility of the country with a more terrible destruction. ⁴

"I have generally witnessed a *humane* treatment exercised towards that dependent and humiliated race of men. The negro in America is condemned to the drudgery of perpetual labor, cut off from every means of improvement, conscious of his degraded state, in the midst of freemen who regard him with contempt, made to feel his inferiority, and hopeless, of ever enjoying any great melioration of his condition. How few are the negroes who are enabled either to read or write! What society can subsist between a master and a slave? What would there be in that society, when we consider the general characters, occupations and conversations of those masters favorable to improvement? Among the blacks is misery enough. With what fine tints can imagination invest the rags, the dirt, the nakedness so often seen in a quarter of Negro-laborers, or the coarse familiarity and promiscuous intercourse permitted and encouraged among the American slaves?" ⁵

Humanity! Endless toil, no instruction, wretched degradation without hope of change, misery, nakedness, filth and libidinous desires uncontrolled, under the tyranny of masters with little higher moral advantages. Slavery is the utmost atrocity and misery; inequitable in its origin, but righteous and innocent in its prolongation. Though Christianity necessarily abolishes the system, and

³ *The Students at Nassau, from the Southern States, when they heard the Lecturer thus gravely delineate their Negro-quarters, must certainly have been convulsed with laughter.*

⁴ *Smith's Moral and Political Philosophy. Lecture 21.*

⁵ *Smith on the human Species.*

though all its defence is impudent hypocrisy, yet it is unjust, and inhuman to emancipate the slaves.*

Dr. Smith's general proposition is undeniable. Slavery is the utmost injustice. Every affectionate Parent would rather be divested of his terrestrial wealth, than be deprived of his children, who must immediately be condemned to eternal vassalage. This kidnapping comprises every inhumanity: and the act involves equal criminality in the perpetrator, with the misery of the victim. The Philosopher should either have closed his lecture with this position, or continued it in conformity with self-evident truth. But he intimates, that the iniquity of slavery has been removed by the protraction of the crime, and the increase of the offenders. The *grave* manner in which the inquiry is propounded, "is that slavery which was unjust in its *origin*, equally unjust in its *continuance*?" must have been intended as an ironical refutation of slave-dealers. Can an atrocious crime be transformed either in its nature or guilt, after the lapse of two centuries, or by a difference in the place where it was committed?

Man-stealing has existed from the period in which *Nimrod* who was a mighty hunter lived. After the lapse of ages, Moses denounced the sentence of death upon every one who *stealeth, or selleth, or makes merchandize of his brother*, or "detains him in slavery." Thirty three hundred years have since expired; and the additional sanctions of the Gospel to the ancient law have been promulgated. Is that *man-theft* which was condemned from Mount Sinai, at this era, equally disgusting and unrighteous? The *Kidnapper*, says the Moralist, is become the innocent possessor of that property: which was stolen. Thus, antiquity of origin and continuance in the practice, would transform the basest turpitude into the noblest virtue; for, although the Lecturer avows, that the original robbery

* When William Wilberforce first proposed the abolition of the Slave-trade and through all the subsequent discussions, Charles James Fox opposed the odious traffic for its injustice and cruelty; and entertaining a deep sense of its unrighteousness, he uniformly contended, that no political necessity, or any consideration of private benefit, could justify its continuance for one moment "Were it practicable to divest servitude of its severities; still as this execrable slavery violates the rights and compels the submission of its victims, it can be sanctioned by no country which regards the maxims of a policy pure, liberal, and magnanimous."

of the Negroes was "the most atrocious inroad upon justice and humanity ever practised," he also affirms, that a modern Slaveholder has innocently acquired, and righteously, beneficently detains his fellow-immortals in the most ignominious oppression and cruel bondage.

Dr. Smith exemplifies the difficulties, which a man must surmount, who endeavors to combine truth with error, and rectitude of principle with corruption of practice. A descendant of the stolen Negroes cannot be enslaved with greater equity and benevolence than his ancestors; and it is the very acme of delusion, to assert that "the form of slavery at present is *mild*, or that a *humane treatment* is exercised towards the coloured people. Evangelical philanthropy is as far removed from the daily exhibitions of *Slave-Dealers*, as Lazarus in Abraham's bosom is separated from Dives in Hell: by a *great gulf fixed*. Some few servants who perform the domestic duties are tolerably fed and decently clothed; but this indulgence is merely for ostentation like the household ornaments, and for a deception upon visitors. To ascertain the Slave's real character and overwhelming wretchedness, "the rags, dirt, nakedness, coarse familiarity and promiscuous intercourse of the Negro-quarter" must be investigated: and the most transitory inspection evinces, that "the admirable opportunity to improve a peculium" is "the drudgery of perpetual labour;" the "humane treatment," is the mortification of contempt, the sensation of inferiority, and despair of amendment: the *mildness* of slavery is the deprivation of knowledge, and the lacerations of the scourge; and the beneficence of the *Slave-Driver* is the extinction of his captive's comfort the insufficient and often unwholesome food which is allotted him, the withholding necessary raiment, domestic requisites, even an unhealthy hovel, and the constant dread of a separation from his associates, endeared to him by a mutual participation in similar misery.

Dr. Smith's *Morals and Politics* are equally extraordinary. All history corroborates the truth, that more danger attaches to the Union from the internal than from any external foes. The increase of slaves, *articles of merchandize*, is by every means facilitated, as it adds to the property of the kidnapper. What an heinous transgression against God and Man! Mercenary, avaricious oppressors are authorized to steal the child from its Mother's breast for endless servitude. What a libel on the Republic! That from any motive,

such an atrocious crime, for one moment, should be permitted with impunity. What a burlesque! Philosophy *seriously* declares; that a man who has kidnapped all the coloured persons on his plantation, "has become the innocent possessor of that *property*."

Their numbers and strength augment; a sense of their power is also more *deep-rooted*, and permanent; ere long the day of deliverance for them must arrive, Their motto, "*peaceably if we can, forcibly if we must.*" "*Let my people go;*" was the demand of Moses, until the Red Sea received the Tyrants who had oppressed the children of Israel. Slaveholders are neither in their devotional nor beneficent characteristics, much superior to the Egyptian *Task Masters*: They are pre-eminent for infidelity, irreligion, dissipation, and insensibility to the misery which their avarice and luxury generate.

The voice of our Brother's blood cries to Heaven from the ground; and national reformation or national punishment, cannot be far removed.

We are sometimes to consider a nation in a moral light, as a person, consisting of a body, a soul and a duration of life. All the people who compose this nation are considered as one body: the maxims which direct its conduct, constitute its spirit. The ages of its continuance are the duration of its life. On this principle, we attribute to those who compose a nation now, what agrees with those only who formerly composed it; and to this whole body, not only those physical, but even those moral actions, which belong only to one part of it: and that part of a nation which continues, is responsible for the crimes of that which subsists no more. Our Saviour considers a nation as a moral person, who is responsible at one time for crimes committed at another, who hath been borne with, but hath abused that forbearance, and at length, is punished both for committing the crimes, and for abusing the forbearance that had been granted.⁷

"If that part of a nation which subsists in one period, hath no union of time with that which subsisted in another period, it may have even four different unions of another kind. An union of *interest*, if it avail itself of the crimes of its predecessors; an union of *approbation*, if it applaud the shameful causes of its prosperity;

⁷ *Matthew* 23. 29, 30. *Luke* 11. 47-51.

an union of *emulation*, if it follow such examples as ought to be detested; and an union of *accumulation*, if instead of making amend for these faults, it rewards the depravity of those who commit them. If men peaceably enjoy the usurpations of their ancestors, they are usurpers, as their predecessors were, and the justice of God may make these responsible for the usurpations of those; and thus it will be; if you avail yourselves of the crimes of your predecessors, if you extenuate the guilt, if you imitate the practice, and if you fill up the measure of their iniquities. The prosperity of public bodies, when it is founded in iniquity, is an edifice, which with its basis will be presently sunk and gone.⁸

“The trade in human flesh is so scandalous, that it is to the last degree infamous to suffer it to be carried on by the authority of the government of any country. With regard to a regulation of slavery, my detestation of its existence induces me to know no such thing as a regulation of robbery and a restriction of murder. There is no medium, the legislature must either abolish it, or plead guilty to all the iniquity with which it is attended.”⁹

“Have the recorded enormities of slavery excited due compunction in the national conscience? Its evils and iniquity we have seen, we have professed to lament them; we have promised to forsake them. But what has been the result? We cherish slavery; we hug it to our bosoms; and we think to sanction the foul embrace by pleading interest in opposition to the unsophisticated dictates of conscience, and the express and unequivocal commands of God. What is this but a deliberate rejection of the divine authority, and a deliberate preference of the service of Mammon to that of God? And whatever guilt arises from this source is properly, strictly and undeniably national.”¹⁰

Dr. Smith asserts, that all the pretences to justify slavery are *impudent hypocrisy*, only equalled by the inhumanity of the traffic. If the Slave-holder offers one plea except the broad defence of open shameless depravity; if he make a solitary excuse distinct from the inordinate love of wealth; all his equivocations are the summit of boundless dissimulation: and “if a Church-Officer were a follower

⁸ *Saurin.*

⁹ *Charles James Fox.*

¹⁰ *Christian Observer.*

of Paul the aged, he would address such a man, especially if *he seeks to turn away others from the faith; O full of all subtilty, and all mischief, thou child of the Devil, thou enemy of all righteousness, wilt thou not cease to pervert the right ways of the Lord?*¹¹

Dr. Smith affirms, that the Slave-holder innocently possesses his property; that justice, humanity and compassion require not the manumission of slaves,¹² that a free people would not suffer a Legislature thus to dispose of any other portion of their property, and that the public safety necessarily prevents a speedy accomplishment of the emancipation of the coloured population, an event so desirable to humanity.

How can a Christian possess that which he knew was stolen? He who would *gravely* profess, that a slave is *honest property*, is a subject for the lunatic Hospital, not for moral discipline? How can a Philosopher indicate that Slavery is the most atrocious injustice, inhumanity and misery, and notwithstanding declare, that he who has kidnapped his servants, is not bound, by justice and humanity to impoverish himself for his Slave? How dare an Expositor of the Book sanction the detention of men in Slavery?

"What free people would allow their Legislature to dispose in the same manner, of any other portion of their property?" But *Negroes or their descendants never could be property*. A free people and hold slaves? Republicans, and traffic their fellow-creatures! Democrats, and enslave those who are born with natural, inherent, and inalienable rights! and *Christians all!*—NO: such persons are enemies of the Republic, humanity, religion and God.

Dr. Smith avers that it is unjust, inhuman and impracticable to emancipate the slaves: but the Lecture's equity and benevolence are totally indescribable. Theft is atrocious in Africa, but in America, it is innocent. Kidnapping is the most diabolical barbarity on the Gold Coast, but in Columbia, it is cruel to impede persons from perpetrating this enormity. "To impoverish himself for the benefit of his slave! But this is not a case of charity. The slave was originally stolen; all the produce of his labour except

¹¹ Acts 13. 6-12.

¹² *Against such "moral philosophy;" he whose blood does not boil with Christian indignation, is so far from being a disciple of that Jesus who pronounced his hypocritical Auditors a generation of vipers, that he ought not to be denominated, man.*

the most wretched and meagre fare and clothing has been purloined; and the services of his children which ought to have been benefited and requited the Parent's care, have only added to a Thief's riches. The wealth of every Slave-holder in the World is as obviously, an unjust acquisition, as if he had entered a Bank and escaped with a load of its notes: alas! the latter and the inferior sin is punished, and a most enormous crime which virtually includes the direct and simultaneous transgression of the whole decalogue is legalized and rewarded; men being honorable in proportion to the magnitude of their robberies.

Shall interest affect our person only? Which is most unjust, to manumit a slave unrighteously doomed and determined for servitude, or to sanction the endless deprivation of all his hopes and enjoyment? Which is most inhuman? To authorize the union of families and relations, or to sever them in eternal separation? Is not the plea, that emancipation is impracticable, the most impudent hypocrisy, and the most glaring absurdity ever propounded for contemplation? Covetous men will not adopt the measure, but were every Slave-holder impressively certified of the iniquity and danger of his oppressions; were he sensible that exclusion from heaven would attend a life and death in impenitence, after evangelical illumination had developed his guilt and its consequences; were he convinced that the day of retribution would unfold for him horrors inconceivable and everlasting; and did he realize equal conscientious smiting upon this sin, which he has experienced upon other transgressions; the Jubilee trumpet would soon proclaim universal deliverance to the captive. Can any suppositious expediency, any dread of political disorder, or any private advantage, justify the prolongation of corruption, the enormity of which is unequalled, or repel the holy claim to its extinction? The system is so entirely corrupt, that it admits of no cure, but by a total and immediate, abolition. For a gradual emancipation is a virtual recognition of the right, and establishes the rectitude of the practice. If it be just for one moment, it is halloed for ever; and if it be inequitable, not a day should it be tolerated.

No excuses for turpitude, no defence of crime can possibly be valid. For creatures under the government of divine Revelation, the question what is most politic, ought never to be asked; but

what is our duty? No man can derive any self-justification from the apology, that the sin is strictly chargeable upon the nation, and that individuals are not inculpated in the guilt; for "national regard to the externals of religion cannot avert national judgments, so long as murder and cruel oppression, are sanctioned by law, or permitted to be perpetrated with impunity."¹³

Dr. Smith is a lucid demonstration of Apostolic truth: *evil communications corrupt good manners*. The most inflexible opponent of *Man-stealing*, by a long residence among Slave-Holders, although he never actually participated in the traffic of souls, experiences a torpor of indignation, an insensibility to human wo, a deadness of evangelical philanthropy, and a diminution of his high sense of moral rectitude, which, were he to enter into a minute and sedulous investigation of his former conscientiousness, contrasted with his present indifference, reminds him of the indignant reply; *What! is thy servant a dog that he should do this great thing? force the mortifying lamentation; Against thee have I sinned and done this evil in thy sight!* and impel the melancholy prayer, *Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou God of my salvation; then shall I be innocent from the great transgression!*

Dr. Smith's natural feelings revolt from slavery; but by vindicating its adherents, he has involved himself in a labyrinth; from which by no ingenuity, can he be extricated. What more preposterous! an American Republican, who boasts of his freedom, *driving slaves*. What more injurious! A Philosopher, inculcating that the most atrocious inroad upon justice and humanity on the coast of Africa, is mildness, equity and benevolence; in the interior of Columbia. What more contradictory! a Christian Minister's "Moral Philosophy," confuting the *self-evident* verities of his own Confession of Faith! This inconsistency originates in *that fear of man which bringeth a snare*. *Know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God: whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God*. "Such a profession of the Gospel as gives no offence to a world that lieth in wickedness, will leave a man to perish with the enemies of Christ."¹⁴

Dr. Smith's palliations are inefficient. No sophistry can disguise

¹³ Scott.

¹⁴ Scott.

the principle which he insinuates, the innocence of the present Slave-holder—the justice of his claim to the slaves, and the benignity with which they are maintained. The Professor's facts are as unaccountable as his morals and politics—in what section of the Union—all that *humanity, mildness, relaxation and amusements*, but which he himself graphically defines to be the drudgery of perpetual labour, ignorance, bestiality and despair—are discernible, not only defies the researches of Philosophy, but the discoveries of Geography. If they are circumscribed by any department of literature, it is within the Astronomer's circle:—LUNAR *observations*. In direct unequivocal contradiction to Dr. Smith's Philosophy; we assert, that no Slave-holder is innocent; that he is an unjust, cruel, criminal Kidnapper, who is guilty of the most atrocious transgression against God and Man: that it is the most infatuated delusion for such men to believe, or the most impudent hypocrisy in them to profess themselves innocent, that whole counties may be traversed in which comparatively few persons can be traced, who distribute as many comforts or as much care to their slaves as their horses; that the general management of the slave is a complication of indescribable barbarity: that Christian Professors are not exempt from the enormity of the crime, or the application of the charge; and every *Man-stealer* is DARED *either to refute the doctrine or to disprove the accusation*.

FINIS.